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THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND THE DOCTRINE OF PROGRESS

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PREFACE

The problem of the rôle of philosophy of history in the social gospel literature is part of the larger problem of the use of history in Christian theology, a problem which is particularly acute for the modernist theologian who is anxious to bring past insights to bear upon present needs. Thus this study of the social gospel has been undertaken with the idea that to understand the function of philosophy of history in a small, rather clearly defined area of modernist theology may yield insights as to the nature of the larger problem.

A study of the social gospel of the first two decades of the present century in America reveals that its exponents relied on the interpretation of history current at the time, namely, the doctrine of progress, for their world view and ethic, and that the interpretation of the teaching of Jesus with which they combined the doctrine was influenced by the doctrine itself. But the social gospel is in straits at the moment because the doctrine of progress is no longer tenable in the form in which they used it. Hence, lacking a world view they have no basis for an ethic, and not only their conclusions but their methodology is called in question.

The problem of those who are anxious to preserve the values of the social gospel, therefore, is threefold: They must decide whether to abandon philosophy of history as a basis for their ethical idealism, or to set forth a new philosophy of history acceptable to modern thought; they must come to a decision as to the use which can be made of New Testament teaching; they must grapple with the problems raised by their methodology.

Our concern is with the first of these problems. Hence this thesis includes an analysis of the rôle of the idea of progress in the social gospel literature, particularly in the writings of Washington Gladden, Shailer Mathews, Walter Rauschenbusch and Harry F. Ward; a study of the doctrine of progress in its historical and problematical aspects; and an analysis of the task which confronts social gospel writers in the light of present day

thought on the nature of history. It has been undertaken in the hope that such a study will clarify the issues sufficiently to further realistic and creative thinking on one of the major tasks of religious thinkers in our time,--the development of a world view adequate for direction of the common life.

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CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND ITS PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

The social gospel in America is a phase of modernist theology in which a considered attempt is made to apply the teachings of Jesus to the problems of an industrial society.[1] Its appearance cannot be understood without an appreciation of the social conditions at the turn of the century which aroused the conscience of ethically sensitive men and women to the need for social reform. Nor can its theoretical formulation be understood apart from the contributions of the social sciences to modern thought.[2] For to them is due the articulation, and to a certain extent, the creation of our modern social consciousness with its dual emphasis on the social determination of the individual and on the possibility of social control. Further with them originated that interest in the social nature and function of religion which is of particular importance to the social gospel theologian.[3]

It is not within our province, however, to attempt a detailed study of the <u>history</u> of the social gospel in its genetic development, fascinating and important as that story is.[4] Our

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[1]"The Social Gospel," <u>A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics</u>. Cf. Shailer Mathews, <u>Jesus on Social Institutions</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 5: "Although Freemantle, Westcott, Abbott, Strong, Ely, Herron, Hill and Gladden had aroused the conscience of the church to its social obligations, so far as I know this volume was the first attempt in America to study systematically and exegetically the bearing of the gospel material upon social institutions."

[2]W. A. Visser 'T Hooft, <u>The Background of the Social Gospel in America</u> (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk, Willink and Zoon, 1928), p. 16: "The social gospel is more than an application of Christian principles to society; it is also an application of social principles to Christianity; or to put it shortly: it is a form of interpenetration of religious and social thought."

[3]Mathews, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 5.

[4]A Ph.D. thesis on this subject is now in preparation at the Divinity School of Yale University. Cf. C. Howard Hopkins, "The History of Social Idealism in American Protestantism."

concern is rather with an analysis and evaluation of the theory of the social gospel as it developed under the stimulus of the social sciences. In particular, our interest lies in the way in which the social gospel theologians related the Christian world view, namely, the concept of the Kingdom of God, to the interpretation of history and society popular at the time, namely, the theory of progress.[1] For without knowledge of its roots it is impossible to understand and evaluate the resulting social ethic.

As in the case of all modernist theology, the crucial point of estimate of the social gospel lies in the way in which the "permanent and central values of inherited orthodoxy"[2] are related to new problems and ideas.[3] Accordingly we have studied the social gospel literature, in particular the work of Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, Shailer Mathews, and Harry F. Ward, the most important representatives of this type of theology in America in the first two decades of the present century,[4] with the following questions in mind: Do the authors make use of an idea of progress? If so, what form does the doctrine of progress

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[1]E. E. Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies (New York and London: Harpers, 1936), p. 44: "It is the relation of the Utopia of sociological thinking to the Kingdom of God of the Christian tradition which gives us the social gospel. The coming of the Kingdom in society is linked up with the idea of progress, and grows, indeed, to be regarded as inevitable in much popular thinking." Cf. Richard Niebuhr, in Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932), Preface, p. xxi; T Hooft, op. cit., pp. 56 f.

[2]Shailer Mathews, The Faith of Modernism (New York: Macmillan, 1924), p. 23.

[3]The salient characteristics of modernist methodology may be summarized as follows: (1) the interpretation of the historic Christian doctrines in terms of the social situation in which they arose, a procedure which assumes that the best test of doctrinal validity is the pragmatic one of efficient performance of function; (2) the reinterpretation of historic religious insights in terms relevant to the thought patterns and experiences of the present day, a procedure which assumes the presence of an area of experience common alike to the men of the past and of the present. For comprehensive discussion of this methodology see Aubrey, op. cit., chap. ii; Miles Krumbine (ed.), The Process of Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1933), chaps. ii, iii, xiii; Mathews, The Faith of Modernism.

[4]The present position of Reinhold Niebuhr is so at variance with that of these individuals that his writings will be considered rather as a critique of the social gospel than as a typical expression.

take? Secondly, how is the idea of progress related to traditional Christian theology? What role does it play in the modernizing of Christian tradition? Finally, how is the resulting combination to be evaluated? These are the questions at issue.

Evidence is not lacking that all four of the individuals mentioned hold to a concept of progress as an integral part of their thought. Progress is conceived as movement in the direction of a world-wide democracy in all areas of life,--political, social, economic. It is regarded as inherent in biological evolution and human history and as expressive of the purpose and activity of the immanent God. Finally, it is employed as a spur to ethical activity in the achievement of democracy. Let us first consider the definition of progress as set forth in the literature under consideration.

Washington Gladden in an exceedingly interesting address to the Congregational Association of Illinois, May 23, 1900, discourses at length and with enthusiasm on progress in the United States during the nineteenth century. He notes the increase in wealth, the developments in science and technology, the abolition of slavery, the gains in the condition of the laborer, and, most important of all, the progress in human attitudes signalized by the spread of democratic forms and ideals. The magnitude of these accomplishments and the accelerating rate of progress fill him with the hope that the near future will see the complete realization of democracy and the end of all poverty and strife.[1]

Nor is this essay merely an effusion appropriate to the celebration of the new century, for the same optimism is to be observed in both his earlier and later writings. Thus in 1886 he states with respect to the labor problem: "I cannot help hoping and believing that the worst of the warfare between capital and labor is now past in this country, and that the day of peace is even now dawning."[2] And in a discussion of the World War and the policy that the United States should pursue with respect to it,

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[1]Washington Gladden, "The New Century and the New Nation (1900)," The New Idolatry and Other Discussions (New York: McClure Phillips & Co., 1905).

[2]Gladden, Applied Christianity (8th ed.; Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1894), p. 178. Cf. Gladden, Social Facts and Forces (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p. 38.

that is on the whole an able and shrewd analysis of the issues involved, we find such a statement as the following:

> The reign of good will is wider and stronger far than it was a thousand years ago, or even a hundred years ago. . . . . It has abolished slavery. It has lowered the barriers of caste. It has lightened the burdens of the poor and opened to them the door of opportunity. It has given honor to women, and is now proceeding to clothe her with political power. . . . . Between the peoples, also, of the several nations, many bonds of amity, many co-operative relations have been established. Commerce has been weaving the ties of mutual service; travel and migration have been promoting acquaintance and friendship. We have even been hoping for a world commonwealth in which we might all be fellow citizens. . . . .
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> This debacle of civilization will be but a ghastly horror, an eclipse of faith, if it do not usher in a new day with new international relationships, new bonds of unity, new guarantees of friendship, new hopes of permanent peace.[1]

Examples of a similar belief in the progressive realization of democracy are plentiful in the work of Rauschenbusch, Mathews and Ward. Rauschenbusch is more concerned to point out social evils than to dwell on social accomplishments, but undergirding his critique of society is his confidence in its ultimate betterment, as the following quotation indicates:

> In recent centuries the vast forces of social evolution seem to have set in the direction toward which Jesus faced. Since the Reformation the institutions of religion have been more or less democratized. The common people have secured some participation in political power and have been able to use it somewhat for their economic betterment. They share much more fully in education than formerly. Before the outbreak of the Great War it seemed safe to anticipate that the working people would secure an increasing share of the social wealth, the security, the opportunities for health, for artistic enjoyment, and of all that makes life worth living. Today the future is heavily clouded and uncertain; but our faith still holds that even the great disaster will help ultimately to weaken the despotic and exploiting forces, and make the condition of the common people more than ever the chief concern of science and statesmanship.[2]

At the very center of Shailer Mathews' theology and ethic is his

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[1]Gladden, The Forks of the Road (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 40, 134. Cf. Gladden, Recollections (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), pp. 430, 431; The Church and Modern Life (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1908), p. 197.

[2]Walter Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus (1925 ed.; New York: Association Press, 1916), pp. 42, 43. Cf. Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 163 f., 384 f.

belief in social progress as his book, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, clearly indicates. The following quotations are typical:

> As we look back over this epoch-making movement in which humanity has struggled out from the brutality of early civilization into the incipient rationality of our present cooperative life, we are certainly justified in reasonable hopefulness. Human nature is certainly not without its capacity of spiritual control even in the midst of surroundings which constantly tend to make it revert to lower practices. . . . . Such a tendency is as truly a fact as the events by which it is so frequently obscured. And as a projection of the past it is truly prophetic. For from the ever-growing primacy of personal values will be built the Kingdom of God, the society of the sacrificially social-minded.[1]

> When one takes a long view of the past and sees how humanity in its best moments has organized for itself institutions that insure the rights of the weak, and enforce the duties of the strong; when one sees a whole world with the exception of its enemies sweeping on towards ever more democratic ideals; it is impossible to doubt that morality moves forward; that a divine purpose runs through the ages; and that this purpose will inevitably bring about a better world order. . . . . We who believe in evolution cannot doubt that the nations who stand for these goals toward which human history points are on God's side. In this confidence we find strength to make the sacrifices that the protection of the choicest blessings of humanity demands. We dare to protect our nation as an agent of a cosmic God.[2]

Finally the same sort of evolutionary optimism is to be noted in the work of Harry F. Ward, particularly in his book, The New Social Order. He comments:

> It is increasingly apparent that the new order both in plan and in experiment is forming around certain definite principles. Men everywhere are seeking for a larger measure of equality and for the realization of fraternity in universal service to each other. They are more and more determined to make the social machinery an efficient means to the highest ends of human living. It is becoming manifest that the development of personality is to supersede the acquisition of goods as the goal of social activity and that the fullest development of personality is to be found in the effort to realize the solidarity of the human family.
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> These developments of the present hour make it still clearer that the principles around which the new order is forming are an historical development, that they did not drop suddenly

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[1]Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), pp. 106-108.

[2]Mathews, Patriotism and Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1918), pp. 138, 139. Cf. Mathews, The Faith of Modernism, pp. 6 f.

> out of the sky, were not merely conceived in the imaginations of great men, but have their roots in social necessity. They are the historical unfolding of the spiritual possibilities of the human race out of the environment in which mankind has successively found itself and which it has progressively conquered. Their development and enlargement indicate very clearly that there is in all history a stream of progress. It by no means always flows straight forward; sometimes it eddies and its main currents turn upon themselves, the whole stream bends and flows backward for a space, but in the long run there is progress.[1]

The spread of knowledge and the improvement of communication make possible as never before common conscious action and conscious social control, while universal industrialism makes for a common culture and "a measure of common progress."[2] Thus the task of the hour is to abolish nationalism, imperialism, capitalism and racial hatred and to achieve the democratization of economic life and of relations between nations.[3] To this end he urges the teaching of the ideal of equality and the promotion of a "general understanding of life as a process of unceasing development."[4]

We must now turn to consideration of the social philosophy set forth by these men in support of their belief in progress. As suggested above, this philosophy is concerned with the establishment of three major presuppositions: (1) Human history, biological and social, is the record of the emergence and growth of spiritual values; (2) the achievement of these values rests upon the organic character of biological and social life and is furthered by co-operation or mutual aid; (3) the whole process stems from the creative activity of the immanent God observable in nature and in man. Gladden, Mathews and Ward develop these themes each in his own fashion and with characteristic emphases, while Rauschenbusch, working on the same assumptions, is less concerned to validate them than to show their compatibility with Christian doctrine. Consequently references to his work are few in this section of the chapter.

It is Shailer Mathews who deals most directly with the problem of value in history. In his book, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, he approaches his subject with the avowed

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[1] Harry F. Ward, The New Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1919), p. 356. Cf. ibid., p. 359.

[2] Ibid., pp. 356 f. [3] Ibid., chap. i.

[4] Ibid., p. 75. Cf. pp. 31, 32, 369.

intent of estimating the validity of materialistic views of history, and with a definite appreciation of the significance of this question for ethics and religion.[1] He then proceeds to classify the factors operative in the genetic, socio-psychological process of history as either personal or impersonal, and to examine in detail the nature and significance of the personal factors.[2] As a result of this interrogation he concludes that "history in the long perspective tends to move away from those conditions primarily induced by geographic and economic forces," and that this general tendency has three positive characteristics: "The tendency to substitute inner sanctions and inhibitions for outward authority based on force either human or divine; to recognize the worth of the individual as personal rather than as merely economic; and to substitute through social action, itself increasingly democratic, the giving of justice for the insistence upon rights."[3]

Content with the observation that these values do develop in the course of history he deals sparingly with metaphysical questions as to the nature of a process productive of such values.[4]

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[1]Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, pp. 4, 5: "Is this, then, all that life means--a mechanistic tropism, a struggle to fill hungry stomachs with food, protect cold bodies with clothes and houses, extract passing pleasures from the senses? Or has life something more: a unity emerging amidst opposing diversities; a becoming rather than a mere being; a movement towards personal values; a world order to be constructed from within as well as from without; a freedom from the world of physical and chemical forces; a kingdom of ends as well as of causes; a world of reason rather than a world of sense; a community of creative love which frees humanity from the limitation of natural egoism; a development away from animalism toward God-likeness?

"Which of these antitheses--the materialistic and the spiritual--best describes life's adventure? Or if both are to be accepted, which describes most effectively life's general tendency?"

[2]Ibid., chap. i.

[3]Ibid., p. 189. Cf. Ward, The New Social Order, pp. 96 f., 137.

[4]Mathews, Spiritual Interpretation of History, p. 22: "Every monistic interpretation of human life is too simple. It gets its intelligibility by some neglect of fact." Cf. p. 31: "If the historian is to have any working hypothesis it should be a multiple hypothesis, for it may very well be that he will discover that human history is carried along by a variety of forces

Consequently his work does not contain any systematic development of the organismic theory of nature and society, nor any clear-cut program for the achievement of a functionally integrated society, such as that offered by socialism, for example. Mathews is too much of an opportunist, too fearful of dogmatism to argue for such a goal.[1] He is rather an individualist of the liberal sort, interested in "folks" not theories; ready to participate in any project, however insignificant that gives promise of furthering the values for which he stands. As to any large scale program for society he is silent, trusting the social process to be such that by the constructive meeting of concrete situations the good society will be achieved.[2]

Yet there is that in his writing which is definitely in line with that interest in the unification of life which is so characteristic of the other social gospel writers. His emphasis on the genetic character of history,[3] and his insistence on the social nature of religion,[4] both lend support to belief in the organic character of life. Characteristic is his remark that "spiritualizing of social evolution" is to be done by "socializing the spiritual life."[5] And his belief in the underlying unity of the social process is fundamental.

> The world of nature as well as of history seems full of unrelated and, to any science we as yet possess, unrelatable movements and counter-movements. . . . .
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> Yet in the face of these perplexities, the creative thinkers of all time have held tenaciously to a world of purpose and order, of unity and meaning, above if not within the con-

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which are capable of no synthesis this side of metaphysics--and when a historian enters into metaphysics he has gone to a far country from whose bourne he will never return a historian."

[1]His attitude during the World War is the outstanding exception to the general temper of his writing. Cf. Patriotism and Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1918).

[2]Mathews, Spiritual Interpretation of History, pp. 208, 219. Cf. E. E. Aubrey, "Theology and the Social Process," in Krumbine, op. cit., pp. 46-49.

[3]Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, p. 22.

[4]Aubrey, "Theology and the Social Process," op. cit., pp. 31-44.

[5]Mathews, The Gospel and the Modern Man (New York: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 313, 316.

> geries of change. . . . . History itself, whether it be of the realm of impersonal forces or of the realm of human life, compels belief in this spiritual order that gives coherency to all our experiences. But this compulsion is due to the acceptance of the unity of process rather than that of states.[1]

However, in the work of Gladden and of Ward the concept of organism is central. According to Gladden biological evolution is to be understood in terms of the capacity of organisms for differentiation and integration.[2] New forms emerge as a result of the differentiation of prior organisms; they persist to the degree that they are incorporated into the whole stream of development. The same process is to be observed in the history of society. Increased specialization of activity on the part of individuals within a group either destroys the group or causes its reformation. Likewise changes in the function of groups with respect to each other result in new types of societies. It is the principle of differentiation which accounts for the mobility of society; that of integration which accounts for its stability. Thus the succeeding stages of the evolutionary process can be described in terms of these alternating tendencies.[3]

It seems clear to Mr. Gladden that the end toward which the whole creation moves is the "humanization of the brute."[4] But men can realize their full humanity only to the extent that they share fully in the common life of mankind. Hence the "humanization of the brute" is dependent in the last analysis on the development of the perfect social organism in which the ends of each shall be the ends of all.[5] Thus the conception of the organic character of the evolutionary process becomes not merely a useful

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[1] Ibid., pp. 39, 40.

[2] This is essentially a vitalistic interpretation as the impulse to change comes from within. Cf. Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1904), pp. 235 f. Here he argues that living things have a different kind of power from that which belongs to non-living.

[3] Gladden, Social Facts and Forces, pp. 192 f.; Where Does the Sky Begin? chap. iv; Ruling Ideas of the Present Age (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1895), chap. iv.

[4] Gladden, The Interpreter (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1918), chap. ii.

[5] Gladden, The New Idolatry, pp. 187 f.

category for description of the past but a norm with reference to which progress may be defined in any specific situation. Accordingly progress involves the proper balancing of the forces described above. The processes of differentiation are always threatening to disrupt the social whole but there is always recombination in a new and deeper unity in which the same process of diversification will be repeated again. The following comment of Arnold Toynbee's which he quotes with approval is a striking illustration of the import of this social theory for a specific situation:

> A terrible interval of suffering there was, when the workman, flung off by his master, had not yet found his feet; but that is passing away, and the separation is recognized as a necessary moment in that industrial progress which enabled the workman to take a new step in advance. . . . . If, however, history teaches us that separation is necessary, it also teaches us that permanent separation is impossible. The law of progress is that men separate, but they separate in order to unite. The old union vanishes, but a new union springs up in its place. The old union, founded on the dependence of the workman, disappears--a new union arises, based on the workman's independence. And the new union is deeper and wider than the old.[1]

Neither the atomistic nor the unifying processes are bad in themselves. Their effects are evil only when they fail to check each other and social stagnation or social disintegration takes place. Thus our plans for social organization should take cognizance of both. For example, in a healthy society there must be scope for both the altruistic and the egoistic impulses of individuals.[2] Capitalism is bad because it allows undue exercise of the latter; socialism would not permit sufficient place for their expression.[3]

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[1]Gladden, Applied Christianity, pp. 178, 179. Cf. Social Facts and Forces, chap. vi. Here an interesting suggestion is made that the function of the church in society is to promote its integration.

[2]Gladden, Applied Christianity, p. 180: "When self-love and benevolence are perfectly balanced in human conduct, we shall have on earth the beginning of the thousand years of peace."

[3]Ibid., pp. 32 f. (Quoted in Recollections, p. 299.) Applied Christianity, pp. 95 f.: "They [the Socialists] are right in saying that an industrial system whose sole motive power is self interest and whose sole regulative principle is competition will end in pandemonium; but they are foolish in thinking that humanity will thrive under a system which discards or cripples these self-regarding forces" (p. 98). Cf. Recollections, pp. 306 f.: "The Socialistic solution . . . . does not agree with that

In the same spirit Mr. Gladden develops a theory of the functioning of the individual units in the social hierarchy. Progress will be achieved when each living thing from the lowest to the highest fulfills the law of its own being.[1] For men this involves passing from the law of strife which is the law of the ape and the tiger to the law of co-operation which is the law of man.[2] Man must live by the moral law which is as inexorable in its operation as the law of gravitation if he would achieve his full stature and promote the progress of the race.[3] He is careful to make it clear, however, that this emphasis on the moral law does not imply either a mechanistic interpretation of the evolutionary process[4] or an economic determinism of Marxian or laissez faire variety.[5] Both physical and economic forces play their part in

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theory of human nature of which I have spoken; it gives no adequate play to the self-regarding motives. The present system overworks them; Socialism undervalues them. What we have to do is to co-ordinate them with the motives of good will and sympathy, and get the full force of both in our schemes of social construction."

[1]Gladden, The New Idolatry, pp. 191 f.

[2]Gladden, The Interpreter, p. 38; Recollections, pp.310 f.

[3]Gladden, The Forks of the Road, p. 30: "We often hear orthodox teachers sneering at the law of love as a mere sentimentality--'gelatinous' is the term by which they are apt to characterize it. It is sentimental in just the same sense that the laws of hydrostatics or electro-dynamics are sentimental; it is derived from a book in the same way that the law of gravitation is derived from a book; it is an induction from the facts of life; and its sanctions no more depend on any positive injunction than do the sanctions of the law of dietetics. If you eat poisonous or indigestible food, the retribution is not deferred until after death and the judgment, nor is there any scheme of substitution by which you may evade the penalty; it follows the transgression instantly and inevitably. Not less swift and certain are the consequences of every violation of the moral law." Cf. Recollections, pp. 311, 371; Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 118, 119, 136-139.

[4]Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 112 f.: "The extension of physical law into the spiritual world; the attempt to unify all knowledge by forcing the facts of the moral order into the categories of causation--this is one of the striking phenomena of the present age. . . . . The prevalent skepticism has arisen mainly out of the attempt to explain spiritual facts by physical laws. They cannot be so explained. . . . . As soon as we pass from the inorganic world, we find these maxims failing us."

[5]Gladden, Social Facts and Forces, p. 2: "Fatalism in political economy is only a little less pernicious than in theology. . . . . We are not hopelessly drifting in the current of social

shaping society and the individual but they are not wholly determinative. In the world of human relationships it is the spiritual law, the law of "Good Will," which is increasingly dominant as men progress toward the good society.[1] The one thing needful is that it be recognized as the primary law of human association and that the old conception of society as a chartered struggle of interests be abandoned.[2] Nor does he hold to a spiritual determinism, though it is hard to see how he can logically avoid it. Men are free to disobey God's laws; they do disobey them, in spite of the consequences and so hinder his creative activity.[3]

Mr. Gladden's social philosophy is an excellent illustration of the dangers inherent in the modernist habit of drawing from current thought whatever seems germane to the subject at issue, for we have here a fine pot pourri in which vitalistic and deterministic, individualistic and collectivistic, Kantian and Utilitarian, Hegelian and Bergsonian flavors can be detected,--to say nothing of a dash of Royce and the Cairds, Bushnell, and Ritschl. The Utilitarian concept of human nature as involving both egoistic and altruistic elements is grafted on to the Hegelian theory of historical development by thesis, antithesis, synthesis;

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progress." Cf. Recollections, pp. 96, 252, 296; Applied Christianity, p. 40.

[1]Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 120 f., 280-83: "As we ascend in the kingdom of life, some glimpses appear of those higher principles by which the conduct of spiritual beings must be ruled" (pp. 119-20).

[2]Gladden, The Interpreter, p. 15. Cf. Social Facts and Forces, p. 220: "What men call 'natural law', by which they mean the law of greed and strife . . . . is not a natural law; it is an unnatural law; it is a crime against nature; the law of brotherhood is the only natural law." See also The Forks of the Road, pp. 16 f., 63 f.: Citing Drummond and Kropotkin he observes that even in the animal world the law of strife is qualified by the law of love. "A revision of Darwinism also made it plain that the law of the ape and tiger was modified by the advent of humanity, and that Nature, when the facts were all in, did not warrant the individual in seeking his own in disregard of the welfare of his neighbors. Herbert Spencer proved from a study of the lowest orders of life that altruism is not less primordial than egoism; that self sacrifice is just as natural and just as necessary as self-assertion" (p. 17). It is not hard to infer his opinion of Bernhardi and Treitschke.

[3]Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 27, 28.

while the emphasis of Royce and the Cairds on the organic character of life is linked with Bergson's theory of creative evolution and Kant's conception of the moral law. In addition there are elements of traditional Christian doctrine whose significance will be discussed later.

Harry F. Ward's interest in the organic character of nature and society is no less prominent than Gladden's but there are not so many strange philosophical bedfellows, the argument is more clear cut, and the tone is nearer that of naturalistic humanism. His absorption in socialism, and more recently in communism, derives from his belief in the social nature of the self,[1] and in mutual aid as the creative element in biological and social evolution.[2] Hence his "thoroughgoing acceptance of the functional

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[1]H. F. Ward, Which Way Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 79. Cf. The New Social Order, pp. 96 f.

[2]Ward, The New Social Order, pp. 96 f.: ". . . . the dominant factor in the advance of human activity becomes organized co-operation, just as mutual aid is the dominant factor in the evolution of the animal world. . . . .

"Out of the family affection which has developed through the joint acceptance and performance of the economic tasks of the family there gradually comes the 'dear love of comrades' that enables and ennobles the wider associations of man. Out of the necessary mutual obligations of the common co-operative tasks there develops the moral sense. Out of the moral sense comes the moral law, the code of the family and the state, and finally the power of self-government. Mutual aid, organized into effective forms of conscious co-operation, becomes the most important factor in social evolution and finally determines the survival of groups and of nations. . . . . Increasingly applied in the organized activities of human life, this principle constantly checks, and finally controls in the service of the common good, the spirit of selfishness which if left alone would destroy humanity. Thus do biology and social science in their unfolding of the course of animal and human development, support the judgment of ethics and the faith of religion that the highest expression and realization of life is to be found in co-operative service." Cf. Which Way Religion, pp. 158, 159: "Like other species he [man] . . . . develops according as he learns to practise mutual aid. The cosmos proves to some degree favorable to those who use it co-operatively instead of destructively. . . . .

"Only as we experimentally develop mutual aid can we discover how much the universe lends itself to the support of that effort. . . . . We know enough about the response of the cosmos to those who live in mutual aid to justify us in proceeding further in that direction. It is our only hope for truth as it is our only chance for life." Cf. Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 170; Social Principles of Jesus, p. 14.

point of view with its insistence that all social institutions exist for something bigger than themselves--the well-being of humanity as a whole."[1] Rather than a society based on a proper balance between altruism and egoism, he desires the complete correlation of the individual with a social whole which creates and gives definite expression to man's best, i.e., most universal, self. The following quotation makes plain that his present interest in the Russian experiment stems directly from this interest in a functionally organized society:

> While the academic sociologists elsewhere are debating whether there can be a social organism, the Soviet workers--with brain and hand--are beginning to make the organic society, co-ordinating its several members in a functional relation, guiding it consciously toward chosen ends, animating it with an inflexible will. While in other lands there spreads the consciousness of decline, the feeling of frustration, the temper of futility, the masses in the Soviet Union are becoming conscious of the renewing of life and the turning of a new page in history. Theirs is the buoyant spirit of youth, and they expect their work to grow, with co-operative efforts in other lands, into a world society directed by a consciousness and will as wide as the human race. To this end they are trying to unite the blind urge of humanity toward unity with its conscious aspirations and ideals for solidarity, in one great stream of motivation.[2]

Here his social theory is strikingly different from that of Gladden's. Nor is he in agreement with Gladden's tendency to regard social conflict as identical with the process of differentiation in the biological organism.[3] He is too keenly aware of the destructive nature of social conflict to accept such a Hegelian optimism. The ideal society will be achieved as a result of man's conscious planning. It is not inevitable.[4] Further he rejects

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[1]Ward, Which Way Religion, p. 108. Cf. The New Social Order, p. 9: "The outstanding fact of the present situation is that humanity . . . . is becoming conscious of itself as an organic unity, and is striving to organize its life upon that basis."

[2]Ward, In Place of Profit, p. 382. Cf. ibid., pp. 454 f.

[3]Cf. the analysis of Washington Gladden's position on p. 11 of this chapter.

[4]Ward, Social Evangelism (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1915), pp. 40, 41: "The scientific view of the universe . . . . shows us a world which moves only as men push it forward with infinite toil. . . . . If there be any progress, it has been achieved as men have discovered and utilized the forces that make for it. Leave nature to itself

the view that progress will be achieved by easy, almost imperceptible stages. The final emergence of the new, no matter how close the tie with the old, frequently seems to those affected by it to be both sudden and strange, and sometimes the old must die that the new may come to birth.[1] Thus change may seem revolutionary which has been long in the making, a disturbing idea to those imbued with the hope of gradualness.

But fundamental to the social philosophy of this whole group of writers is their belief in the creative activity of the immanent God. It serves both as the final ground of their hope of progress and as a stimulus to ethical endeavor. Gladden in particular gives frequent and exuberant expression to this concept. God is within the processes of nature and history continuously revealing himself "in the unity and order of nature, in the enlarging life of humanity, in the inspired insights and convictions of devout believers."[2] It is His purpose that animates the world and gives the clue to the striving of all life toward perfection.[3] Thus Gladden can say with assurance that the cosmic processes are progressive since they are the expression of the creative activity of God, an activity which has not only been going on in the past but which is not yet finished.[4] This confidence

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and there is no evidence that it gets anywhere. It contains within itself the forces of decay as well as the forces of progress." Cf. Which Way Religion, pp. 168 f.

[1]Ward, The New Social Order, pp. 28 f., 376 f. Cf. Social Evangelism, p. 73.

[2]Gladden, The Church and Modern Life (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908), p. 28. Cf. The Interpreter, pp. 52, 53; Recollections, p. 426; Social Facts and Forces, pp. 222 f.; Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 30, 31.

[3]Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? chap. ii; The Interpreter, chap. ii. Cf. 'T Hooft, op. cit., chap. vii. He gives a systematic discussion of the doctrine of immanence as it appears in many social gospel writers. As he points out, one striking feature of this emphasis on the immanent God is its anthropocentrism. Not only is God's creative activity carried on for the sake of man's improvement, but "a perfect humanity would give us the best revelation we could have of divinity. If we could see a perfect man we could learn from him more about God than from any other source" (Gladden, The Church and Modern Life, p. 24).

[4]Gladden, Present Day Theology (3d ed.; Columbus, Ohio: McClelland & Co., 1913), p. 13: "The fact that God is in nature, and in human nature, filling it all with his fullness, working

is at the root of his eager anticipation of the future.

> God is always at work here. Therefore it ought to be a different world and a better world than it was a thousand years ago, or a hundred years ago,--a better world today than it was yesterday. It ought to be and it is. But it is not finished yet--how far from it![1]

> An inexhaustible future beckons a race that feels the energies of the eternal God tingling in its nerves. We are part of a growing organism, and human progress is a living experience, therefore there is hope ahead. That which is impossible now, is becoming possible. Men are willing to sacrifice the present to the future, and to labour on assured that to-day's dream will have become the fact to-morrow. Our race is grounded in God, and we shall yet partake in unimagined measure of His infinitude.[2]

When men see clearly the nature of their partnership with God the redemption of society will proceed apace. A new spirit is already in evidence.

> The conviction is steadily strengthening that the one thing needful is a change in the direction of the ruling motive from self-aggrandizement to service. And to all who will carefully study the prevailing tendencies it will be clear that this is the way the world is going. "One perceives," says Mr. Wells, "something that goes on, that is constantly working to make order out of casualty, beauty out of confusion, justice, kindliness, mercy out of cruelty and inconsiderate pressure. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to speak of this force that struggles and tends to make and do, as Good Will. More and more evident it is, as one reviews the ages, that there is much more than lust, hunger, avarice, vanity, and more or less intelligent fear, among the motives of mankind. The Good Will of our race, however arising, however trivial, however subordinated to individual ends, however comically inadequate a thing it may be in this individual case or that, is in the aggregate an operating will. In spite of all the confusions and thwartings of life, the halts and resiliences and the counter strokes of fate, it is manifest that, in the long run, human life becomes broader than it was, gentler than it was, finer and deeper. On the whole and nowadays almost steadily--things get better. There is a secular amelioration of life, and it is brought about by Good Will working through the efforts of men.[3]

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out his great designs; that all the natural forces are only methods of his working; that all these are parts of his ways; that history reveals him; that what we call progress is only the carrying forward of his eternal purpose; . . . . this is the doctrine which men are beginning to understand and lay hold upon."

[1]Gladden, The Interpreter, pp. 29, 30.

[2]Gladden, The New Idolatry, p. 231. Cf. p. 212.

[3]Gladden, Recollections, p. 312.

Likewise Ward refers to the desirability of working with the eternal spirit of the universe,[1] to the joys of comradeship with the Great Companion,[2] or, more recently, to the possibility of relying on that in the cosmos which supports ethical endeavor.[3] Rauschenbusch, too, observes that "all history becomes the unfolding of the purpose of the immanent God who is working in the race toward the commonwealth of spiritual liberty and righteousness. History is the sacred workshop of God."[4] And, finally, Mathews argues from the evidence for spiritual tendencies in history to a God who is immanent in the evolutionary process, not merely as the elan vital, or as creative rationality, but as supremely revealed in the personality-producing activities of the universe.[5] Thus he urges men to become "deliberate co-workers with the spiritual tendencies of our own day," in particular the growth of democracy, sure that "this call . . . . is no call to a forlorn hope," that "the man who chooses the vicarious life . . . . is cooperating with the unquestionable tendency of human progress."[6]

Having defined that nature of the belief in progress held by the social gospel writers and of the social philosophy supporting it, we turn to the second major problem of the chapter--the relation of this doctrine of progress and the ethic based upon it to the Christian world view and ethic. The effort at reconciliation must be understood as one phase of the modern search for authority in religion. The problem is twofold: that of recommending Christianity to social idealists for whom it is no longer au-

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[1]Ward, The New Social Order, p. 32. [2]Ibid., p. 156.

[3]Ward, Which Way Religion, pp. 158, 159. Cf. pp. 39, 40. "The only way in which theology can escape becoming an accomplice of science in leading the masses into the bondage of a mechanized, money-making, order of life . . . . is to continue the search for an ethical God whose presence can be practiced in the organized ways of human living, with whom men can co-operate in the working out of a real salvation from sins that are vividly concrete and terribly destructive."

[4]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 121. Cf. A Theology for the Social Gospel, pp. 178, 179.

[5]Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, pp. 108, 193 f; Patriotism and Religion, pp. 31-33; Faith of Modernism, pp. 108 f.; The Gospel and the Modern Man, p. 82.

[6]Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, pp. 198 f.

thoritative; that of recommending social reconstruction to Christians for whom modern thought must be tested by Christian fundamentals. Thus on the one hand we have an attempt to establish the validity of a social program by proving that the philosophy of history on which it is based is congruent with the Christian tradition,[1] and on the other an attempt to establish the validity of Christian idealism by showing its compatibility with current thought on the problems of history and society.[2] In other words, the writers seem to be asserting in one breath that plans for the new era will work because "Jesus says so," and in the next that Jesus' way of life will work because contemporary history or sociology or science "says so." The danger of falling between two stools is evident.

Let us first consider the bearing of the concept of progress on the Christian doctrine of salvation. At the outset its influence is evident in the insistence that the doctrine of salvation must be extended to include the redemption of society.[3] Salvation is a social matter involving not the rescue of the individual <u>from</u> the world but his rescue <u>in</u> the world,[4] and therefore

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[1]By the Christian tradition is meant neither Reformation nor Catholic Christianity but a modern interpretation of the teaching of Jesus and of the social message of the prophets. According to Rauschenbusch "those who have trained their religious thinking on the Hebrew prophets and the genuine teachings of Jesus are for the social gospel" (<u>A Theology for the Social Gospel</u>, p. 210. Cf. pp. 20 f.).

[2]Cf. Mathews, <u>The Gospel and the Modern Man</u>, p. 62: "If we are to bring the gospel to the modern man, we must set forth the permanent values of the Christianity of the New Testament, and above all of the historical Jesus himself, in the light of evolution, divine immanence, social solidarity and a sense of reality born of scientific method and a perception of worth." Cf. <u>The Spiritual Interpretation of History</u>, pp. 216 f.

[3]Rauschenbusch emphasizes that the idea of the redemption of the social organism is the most important point of contact between the Christian faith and contemporary thought (<u>A Theology for the Social Gospel</u>, pp. 23, 24).

[4]Mathews, <u>The Individual and the Social Gospel</u> (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1914), p. 20. Cf. Rauschenbusch, who refers to the emphasis on the salvation of the individual for the life to come as a half truth, the "proper product of a half way system of theology" (<u>A Theology for the Social Gospel</u>, p. 8).

the rescue of the world itself.[1] Salvation is thus equated with the achievement of the Kingdom of God on earth,[2] and the latter is identified as the goal of progress, namely, democracy. "His [Jesus] good news of the Kingdom of Heaven presupposes what modern sociology formally declares, that the individual is fulfilled only as a member of an increasingly organic community, that society is meaningless unless it is justified and realized in the lives of all its members."[3] Likewise the law of progress, i.e., co-opera-

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[1]The extent to which this idea can be carried is well illustrated by the following quotation from a sermon of Washington Gladden's on the theme "Christ came to save the world": "In many such texts it is evident that the word [world] is used to describe the human race, humanity, man and his environment; that it is not thought of as a hostile realm set over against the Kingdom of heaven, but as the subject of Christ's redeeming and saving grace. . . . . It is the world--the whole world . . . . ; it is the cosmos . . . . that Christ came to save. And He has not failed in doing what he came to do. He is saving the world, the whole of it; He is bringing back lost Paradise; his saving health is known not only to individuals but to nations, societies, institutions, nay it is even true that his healing and transforming power is felt in the physical world; and that wherever he goes the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for Him and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose" (Ruling Ideas of the Present Age, pp. 104 f.). Further, that this notion of the salvation of the physical world is not a figurative expression the following makes clear: "When we speak of making a better world of this, we ought to mean the physical world as well as the social world and the moral world. . . . . This vital sympathy between man and his environment is never lost sight of by the great prophets. The redemption of the world must mean, as they clearly see, the redemption of the world in which man lives. When the drunkard is reformed the house which he inhabits puts on a new face and there are flowers instead of weeds in his garden. . . . . The redemption of the physical order will be the result of the socialization of mankind" (The Church and Modern Life, pp. 78-81). Cf. Ward, Social Evangelism, pp. 89, 90; Mathews, The Individual and the Social Gospel, p. 68.

[2]Gladden, The Interpreter, pp. 263, 264: "For the Christians of your town or city to seek first the Kingdom of God would be, then, to wish and pray and work that the government of your city may be conformed to the law of the Kingdom; that the schools and colleges may lead the youth into the way of the Kingdom; that your art may be inspired by a vision of the Kingdom; that your play may reflect the joy of the Kingdom; that your charities may reveal the compassion of the Kingdom; that your business may illustrate the co-operations of the Kingdom; that your people may live in the life of the Kingdom." Cf. Recollections, p. 63; The Church and Modern Life, pp. 85, 154.

[3]Ward, Which Way Religion, p. 154. Cf. Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, pp. 60, 61; A Theology for the

tion, is specifically equated with the law of the Kingdom, i.e., love. Says Ward, "the simplest statement of this law of social progress is the principle of reciprocity which was taught in the Sermon on the Mount."[1] Conversely Christ's teaching of love is valid because it is an expression of a fundamental law of social organization confirmed by scientific tests.

> This, as I understand it, is the meaning of Christ's law of life. It is not his law because he originated it; it is his because he most clearly taught it, and most consistently lived by it; because he made it central in morality. It rests on no man's word; it is as truly a natural law as is the law of gravitation or the laws of chemical affinity. . . . . The fundamental objection to the world's way is that it is unnatural and unscientific; it is an inversion of life.[2]

Or again:

> So the law of the kingdom is inwrought with the very constitution of human society. It is exact with the precision of scientific facts. The kingdom is organized around the law of love, and the scientist confirms it, declaring that the social organism develops only as fast as the altruistic instincts dominate the egoistic,--that self-preservation demands self-sacrifice.[3]

Rauschenbusch is more realistic in his statement of the problem of living by the law of love. He observed that "to most men the demand to live as Jesus would, is mainly useful to bring home the fact that it is hard to live a Christ-like life in a mammonistic society. It convicts our social order of sin but it does not re-

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Social Gospel, p. 5; The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 74; Gladden, The New Idolatry, pp. 236 f.; Mathews, Patriotism and Religion, pp. 31-33, 132 f.; Kirby Page, "Preaching and Socialism" in G. Bromley Oxnam (ed.), Preaching and the Social Crisis (New York: Abingdon Press, 1933), p. 36: "When we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth,' we are praying for the transformation of capitalism into a co-operative commonwealth."

[1]Ward, The New Social Order, p. 97. Cf. Our Economic Morality (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 18: "The prophets and Jesus . . . . advocate the morality of mutual aid against that of exploitation." Cf. Gladden, The New Idolatry, p. 173; The Church and Modern Life, pp. 90, 106, 107, 111, 112; Ruling Ideas of the Present Age, p. 291; Recollections, pp. 298, 420; Applied Christianity, p. 169; The Interpreter, pp. 108, 191.

[2]Gladden, Recollections, p. 311. Applied Christianity, p. 231, contains a definitely Thomistic statement of this theme.

[3]Ward, Social Evangelism, p. 108. Cf. Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, p. 210; The Gospel and the Modern Man, p. 313.

construct it."[1] Nonetheless, he too calls for the application of "socialized love" to the problems of social organization[2] and regards the teachings of Jesus as "anticipations of the fraternal ethics of democracy and prophecies of social common sense."[3]

Accordingly it is clear that obstructions to progress are equally obstructions to the kingdom. That is, the concepts of evil and of sin are modified by the idea of progress to mean imperfection[4] and the failure to co-operate with the forces of progress. Thus Mathews:

> The Modernist looks upon sin as violation of the immanent divine will to good will and to progress towards that which is more personal; a conscious yielding, because of immediate pleasure, to the backward pull of outgrown goods; a flaunting of those personal forces both of God and human society which make progress possible. Human nature is not corrupt but atavistic.[5]

In other words, sin is selfishness,[6] individual or social.[7] Because of the existence of sin and its social nature one must speak of the regeneration of the social order. As Gladden puts it, "since the world is what it is, the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of salvation."[8] And the price of salvation is suffering. "Social regeneration involves not only growth but conflict. . . . .

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[1]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 46.

[2]Ibid., p. 44.

[3]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 158.

[4]Ibid., p. 43. Cf. Gladden, The Interpreter, p. 35.

[5]Mathews, The Faith of Modernism, p. 97. Cf. Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 52.

[6]Gladden, Present Day Theology, pp. 67-87.

[7]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, pp. 61-78. Here is developed an interesting notion of the "hereditary racial unity of sin" by which is meant the inescapable influence of a bad social environment on the individual. It is suggested further that a "social conception of the Kingdom of Evil . . . . would contain the political and social protest against oppression and illusion for which the belief in a Satanic Kingdom stood in times of its greatest vitality" (p. 90).

[8]Gladden, Applied Christianity, p. 212. Cf. Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 5; Ward, Social Evangelism, pp. 94 f.

The cross is not accidental but is a law of social progress."[1]

However, the Kingdom is to be attained in the course of evolutionary development, not by a catastrophic upheaval.[2] It should be thought of as an historical achievement, not as a miraculous event.[3] In other words, it is identical with the goal of progress in that it is the end toward which the streamof biological and social evolution is tending. Rauschenbusch has stated this very clearly:

> The spread of evolutionary ideas . . . . has opened a vast historical outlook, backward and forward, and trained us in bold conceptions of the upward climb of the race. . . . . It has prepared us for understanding the idea of a Reign of God toward which all creation is moving. Translate the evolutionary theories into religious faith, and you have the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. This combination with scientific evolutionary thought has freed the Kingdom ideal of its catastrophic setting and its background of demonism and so adapted it to the climate of the modern world.[4]

Agreement with this point of view is to be found in each of the other three writers, as the following quotations indicate:

> If the truth of which Jesus the Christ is the manifestation did not first appear in the world about nineteen hundred years ago. . . . ; if, on the contrary, it was the very theme of the song of the morning stars when they sang together; if it begins to find its expression in the lowest orders of living creatures; if the rudiments of love and self sacrifice--the elements of Christliness,--are among the primordial tendencies of nature; and if these principles have been steadily

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[1]Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 193. Cf. Mathews, The Faith of Modernism, p. 161.

[2]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 56: "Those who hold it [belief in the Kingdom] must cease to put their hope in salvation by catastrophe and learn to recognize and apply the law of development of human life. . . . . They must break with the artificial schemes and the determinism of an unhistorical age and use modern resources to understand the way God works out retribution and salvation in human affairs." Cf. A Theology for the Social Gospel, pp. 25 f. Here an effort is made to make a place for catastrophes as an aspect of development.

[3]Rauschenbusch takes the position that the parables of Jesus give evidence that he too held to the idea of the evolution of the Kingdom by gradual, natural growth. Cf. A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 210; The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 59.

[4]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 90. Cf. A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 146; The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 42.

> developing since the beginning of creation, so that what was first a mere unconscious tendency has emerged into an ethical law,--then our religion has a footing and a sanction in this world which the world has not hitherto confessed.[1]
>
> It [the Kingdom] has a historical basis, and embodies not only the hopes of humanity but capitalizes the experience of the race. It will achieve its goal because it has behind it not only the social achievement of the past, but also the unconquerable impulse for perfection which is one of the strongest forces in the evolution of society, one aspect of the race for God.[2]
>
> In this spiritualizing of social forces we can see the steady progress of those spiritual ideals which characterize the kingdom of God. Out from the storm and stress of our modern industrial order, out from the moral lassitude of so much of our culture, we can see emerging a hope and faith in the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ. No one of us can be sure just when that triumph will be complete, but we can already see the great lines of strategy along which the conflict is being waged. . . . . Thus from the side of the individual and of society, the armies of the Lord are closing in upon human life, and we may already confidently hope that the time is not far distant when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.[3]

To the extent that genuine progress has been attained the kingdom is regarded as already partially realized. It is "among us," a transforming energy, a historical force, finding expression in democratic institutions.[4] As even greater gains are made in the Christianization of the social order its coming is hastened.[5] In-

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[1]Gladden, Ruling Ideas of the Present Age, p. 282. Cf. ibid., pp. 298, 299; Where Does the Sky Begin? p. 333.

[2]Ward, Social Evangelism, p. 113.

[3]Mathews, The Individual and the Social Gospel, pp. 81, 82.

[4]Rauschenbusch, The Theology of the Social Gospel, pp. 165, 166: "The Kingdom of God is not a concept nor an ideal merely, but an historical force. It is a vital and organizing energy now at work in humanity. Its capacity to save the social order depends on its pervasive presence within the social organism. . . . . Where men live in the consciousness of solidarity and in the actual practice of love with their fellow-men, they are not far from the Kingdom of God." Cf. Ward, The New Social Order, p. 30.

[5]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 155: "The larger part of the work of christianizing our social order is already accomplished, and the success which has attended it ought to create a victorious self-assertion in all who stake their faith on its effectiveness. . . . . Christianity works. Moreover,

deed, even now "the kingdom of God is at hand."[1]

Finally it is important to note the way in which the immanent God of the philosophy of progress is related to the Christian concepts of God and of man. Jesus' teaching of the Fatherhood of God is interpreted as indicative of God's essential kinship with men, and thus of the immanence of God in human life. The God of Jesus points the way to a belief in God as Creative Love, working in the processes of history and suffering with men in their efforts to combat sin and imperfection. The theory of evolution simply amplifies his original concept.

> To Jesus, history was full of God's presence. His Father was still working and this has been the inspiration of every soul who has fairly grasped the message which Jesus brought the world. . . . .
>
> God is in his world. . . . . That is the source of the Christian's hope. . . . . He is working with God and God must bring in his own kingdom. . . . . He is to let God work through him and he is to work with God in this creation of a better social order. To do this he is to follow those spiritual impulses toward love and justice which he feels in his own soul. For these impulses are one way which God has of bringing in his kingdom. Fraternity is possible because God helps us to be brothers by making us his sons.[2]

Obviously it is the analogy of the family relationship which is most important both as regards men's relation to God and their relation to each other. If men are the sons of God not only is their potential capacity for ethical action great,[3] but one has

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every part of the social order which has come even a little under the law of Christ has immediately served as a vantage ground for further progress. There has been a speeding up of redemption." Cf. Gladden, Where Does the Sky Begin? pp. 128, 296-302; Ward, Social Evangelism, pp. 18, 19. But contrast ibid., p. 141: "The preacher of the gospel of Jesus must be as his Lord, must possess something of the patience of the infinite. As one of our prophets has reminded us, he who works for social progress must learn to think with the geologist and with God--in eons, not centuries."

[1]Mathews, The Social Gospel, p. 164. He closes the book with this quotation in capitals. Cf. Gladden, The Interpreter, pp. 145, 266; The Church and Modern Life, pp. 194-95: "We are not going to wait another thousand years for our millennium; we are going to have it here and now."

[2]Mathews, The Social Gospel, p. 28. Cf. The Making of Tomorrow, p. 109; Jesus on Social Institutions, pp. 34, 35; Ward, Which Way Religion, p. 144.

[3]Indeed Jesus becomes the archetype of the new man, the symbol of the goal of progress. Mathews, The Gospel and the

the strongest possible basis for a concept of the inherent worth of man and an ideal of reverence for personality.

> When Jesus spoke of God as our Father he democratized God himself. That substituted . . . . free co-operation between man and God for the Jewish mercantile contract ideas. By raising the value of the human soul and its life on the one side, and by bringing God down close to us as our Father, he laid the religious foundation for modern democracy and anticipated the craving of the modern spirit. We to-day conceive of the Reign of God as the Commonwealth of God and Man.[1]

In this way the Christian concept of man is shown to be compatible with the ideal of social solidarity and of human achievement. Thus is the philosophical conception of the immanent God personalized by its connection with the Christian belief in God as Father, and the Christian concept in turn given an evolutionary slant by its reinterpretation in the light of contemporary philosophy.

We have analyzed the concept of progress held by certain social gospel writers of the period of our study, and discussed the use which they make of it in modernizing Christian theology. In conclusion we must evaluate their efforts and suggest the nature of the reactions to their position. Let us first estimate the satisfactoriness with which the doctrine of progress enabled the social gospel to fulfill its function of re-stating the "deepest realities of the Christian experience" in terms of the current world view and the social issues of the hour.

Modern Man, p. 327: "Social orders will replace outgrown social orders, but brotherhood will expand increasingly until the Great Day when Jesus shall be supreme and the successive approaches of the spiritual life toward him as its Type and Saviour shall have culminated in a social order in which sin shall be crushed, Christlike souls shall constitute the Democracy of the Spirit, and God shall be all in all." Cf. Mathews, The Social Gospel, pp. 162, 163.

[1]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 61. Cf. Gladden, The Church and Modern Life, p. 164: "There are those who seem to think that sociology can solve all the problems of our modern life. If sociology can be sufficiently expanded, this may be true; for a truly scientific sociology would have to explain how men came to be social beings, and what is the bond that unites them. If it finds that their relation to a common Father is the fundamental fact of their existence, then it would know that religion is at the heart of it, and that right relations with God are the spring and source of right relations with men. But a sociology which ignores this primary fact has in it no redemptive power."

Notwithstanding a great tradition as to the concern of religion with the character of the common life, American Christianity of the latter half of the nineteenth century was in danger of becoming intellectually barren and socially futile.[1] Its repudiation of scientific thought, especially with respect to the theory of evolution, and its failure to concern itself with the problems of an increasing industrial collectivism, were driving intellectuals, social radicals, and laboring groups alike from the church. The social gospel leaders attempted to adjust to the world view and the social philosophy of these groups, and, thanks in part to their efforts, the church today is still a vital force in American public life. This is no mean accomplishment.

The choice of the idea of progress as a mediating doctrine in this modernization of Christianity was a particularly happy one, for the doctrine of progress, in its widest sense, contained not merely a crystallization of current philosophical and scientific thought on the nature of history, but an ethical deposit of the ardent social idealism of three centuries. Thus it could serve at once as an approach to the modern world view and as a basis for a social ethic. The enlarged outlook on life to which Christianity fell heir in the doctrine of progress, and the conception of ethics as involving not merely regeneration of the individual but long-time planning designed to destroy the social sources of evil were exceedingly valuable contributions.[2] Furthermore, far from being incompatible with Christian thought, its basic assumptions of the worth of man and the value of life were in harmony with, if not derived from, the Christian tradition, thus making the combination an easy and natural one. Finally, since the average American at the turn of the century lived by his faith in progress, the social gospel leaders proved themselves master strategists in turning this source of emotional poise and moral enthusiasm to the uses of Christianity.

However, the question at issue is whether this type of religious philosophy is adequate for the direction and motivation of contemporary social idealism. The impatience of the social gospel leaders with metaphysical "speculation" diverted them from

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[1] T Hooft, op. cit., pp. 17-21.

[2] G. B. Smith, Social Idealism and the Changing Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1913), pp. 106-109.

sufficiently critical examination of the doctrine of progress with the result that such examination is now long overdue.[1] Briefly the concept of progress is no longer tenable in the form in which it appears in the social gospel literature, nor is the interpretation of the teachings of Jesus with which it is combined acceptable at all points to New Testament scholars. These facts set the problem for those who would preserve the great contributions of the social gospel to religion to-day.

The complications are legion. Thanks to the unprecedented historical developments of the twentieth century arising from the increasing complexity of an industrial civilization, and to the changes in the method of writing history due to the work of modern scientific scholarship, not only is the idea of progress under fire but there is no agreement on any substitute philosophy of history. The old interpretations seem invalidated by recent events, and a new interpretation is slow to emerge. Contributory to this lag is the prevalent scepticism among historians as to the possibility of achieving a new synthesis, a scepticism based on the realization of the inescapable subjectivity of all historical productions, even the most "scientific," and an awareness of the apparent irreconcilability of the multitudinous factors operative in human affairs. The social gospel leaders cannot relate their ethical demands to the controlling forces in history for there is no agreement as to what these forces may be,--or indeed as to whether there be any dominant and sustained influences at all. Thus the sense of stability gained from reliance on a definite interpretation of life is lost, and a realistic social ethic in line with instead of at variance from the dominant factors in life awaits development.

If this be the situation, the grounds for our contention that one of the major tasks of a contemporary theology of the social gospel is the formulation of a philosophy of history, adequate to its needs, inclusive of all the information obtainable, and capable of revision in the light of new knowledge, are clear.

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[1] Cf. Aubrey in Krumbine, op. cit., pp. 44-49. "The norm then is neither logical self-consistency nor correspondence with any extra-experiential reality. It is rather the effectiveness of the concept in co-ordinating our experience and promoting our human values" (p. 47). Such a position does not take adequate account of the important problems involved in the relation of value and validity.

Basic to this enterprise is a thorough study of the doctrine of progress in the light of the radically different notions of history which are bidding for recognition. Thus we turn to an analysis of the origin and present status of the doctrine of progress.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF PROGRESS

In order to evaluate the doctrine of progress fairly, it is necessary to take note of its antecedents, its various forms, and the philosophical ideas germane to its development. In its most complete and characteristic form it is the product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was not, however, a creation *de novo* of rationalist thought but is related in various ways to Hellenic and Hebraic thought and to the medieval synthesis of these earlier traditions. Our first task, therefore, in analyzing the origins of this doctrine is to point out its relationship to these earlier forms of thought. What specific elements in the Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian interpretation of history further the idea that society is moving in the direction of desirable goals and strengthen the optimistic attitude to the future resulting from this belief?

Greek thought contains many elements hospitable to the doctrine of progress, notably the concepts of continuity and of causality in history and of teleology as stimulus and organizing principle of activity,[1] of eudaemonism as the basis of an empirical ethic and of natural law conceived in terms of reason. For various reasons, however, these elements were never brought together to form the basis of a doctrine of progress.[2] In the first place the Greeks, in common with many ancient peoples, regarded

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[1]Compare F. J. Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 77-79. He points out that the genealogical method of the Greeks according to which events were arranged after the manner of a genealogy by positing a first cause and tracing the relationship through succeeding events, is comparable to the historical method of modern times. Further the combination of this genealogical method with the teleological argument of Plato and Aristotle provides the cardinal ideas necessary to the concept of development which is integrally related to the doctrine of progress as generally conceived.

[2]J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (2d ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 19.

change as evil, the permanent as the good. Thus salvation was conceived as escape from the impermanent, transitory aspects of life through absorption in the eternal verities. Strongly supporting this nostalgia for the unchanging was the idea that the world to be intelligible must be uniform. Thus, says Dawson, rather than deny the rationality of the universe the Greek was prepared to "deny the evidence of his senses, and to reject all change and becoming--even movement itself--as an illusion."[1]

In accordance with these ideas we find that the prevalent view of history was either that of continual degeneration from the glories of the Golden Age to the sad conditions under which mortals now live and from which there is no escape, or the Oriental theory of cycles probably introduced into Greece as an Orphic legend and developed in detail in Stoic philosophy.[2] Here and there,[3] to be sure, we find expressions of the idea that man has improved in the mastery of the arts since his primitive state, or even a sort of crude theory of the evolution of man from the lower forms of life, but these observations seem always to be associated either with the idea of man as a fallen spirit, or the belief that degeneration inevitably follows development. Thus though the cyclic theory, as elaborated in Stoicism and currently accepted in the Graeco-Roman world, does contain within it the idea of history as development within prescribed limits (Lucretius De Rerum Natura), on the whole it does not admit any conception of development as involving the future emergence of new forms of life or as continuing beyond a certain point. The essentially static conception of society involved in this theory of history is well illustrated in the words of Marcus Aurelius:

> The rational soul wanders round the whole world and through the encompassing void, and gazes into infinite time, and considers the periodic destructions and rebirths of the universe and reflects that our posterity will see nothing new, and that our ancestors saw nothing greater than we have seen. A man of forty years, possessing the most moderate intelligence, may be said to have seen all that is past and all that

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[1]Christopher Dawson, Progress and Religion (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931), p. 147.

[2]Robert Flint, Philosophy of History in France and Germany (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1874), I, 33.

[3]Ibid., pp. 31-33.

is to come; so uniform is the world.[1]

In such a world as this, resignation is the only appropriate mode of behavior.[2]

In the second place, whether due to the mystical strain in Platonic and Aristotelian thought which tended to "turn men's minds from the world of common experience"[3] to intellectual contemplation, or to whatever cause, the men of the ancient world failed to develop the natural sciences to the point where they could experience the control and increasing mastery of nature which is so important an element in the world of the Enlightenment, and which is basic to the belief in progress wherever expressed from the eighteenth century to the present. Schweitzer has well stated the importance of this fact when he says:

> . . . . the natural sciences . . . . came to a standstill before men discovered purposive law in the working of natural forces, and thereon gained power over them. Thus the self-consciousness which keeps alive for the modern--even in the darkest hours of history--a belief in progress, even if it be only a progress in external forms, was altogether lacking to the ancients.[4]

Finally, on the whole, and particularly in the Hellenistic period, the social experience of the ancient world was distinctly unfavorable to the idea of progress. If one lived in the days before the unification of the Mediterranean world under the Roman empire, one's experience was of the decline and decay of kingdoms. And in the days of the Empire the power of Rome seemed so great and the possibility of change so remote that men came to think of Rome as "eternal," an atmosphere distinctly more favorable to the Oriental doctrine of resignation and the pessimistic elements in Neoplatonism than to the idea of progress.[5]

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[1]Marcus Aurelius Meditations xi. 1.

[2]Cf. Albert Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics, The Philosophy of Civilization, Part II (London: A. and C. Black, 1923), p. 40.

[3]Dawson, op. cit., p. 142.

[4]Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 64.

[5]Ernst Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), I, 114.

Likewise the Hebraic tradition which merged with Hellenistic thought in the Christian synthesis contained elements favorable to the idea of progress in close juxtaposition with those intrinsically incompatible with it. In contrast to the cyclic theory of the Greeks with its static conception of society the Jews saw history as the unfolding of God's purpose for them, a purpose which could be checked only by their own disobedience and which was ever working toward a glorious fulfillment in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The relevance of this interpretation of history to the idea of progress is evident, and the fact that in western thought it eventually superseded the cyclic theory of the Greeks is fortunate for the later formulation of the doctrine of progress. It generated a mood of optimism in contrast to the pessimistic view of human affairs which found expression in the cyclical theory, and it accustomed men to look forward to the Golden Age instead of back, and to regard it as possible of attainment in some future, both habits of thought essential to any belief in progress.

However, the idea of progress would never have arisen from this interpretation of history by any inner necessity because it was too firmly embedded in doctrines essentially antagonistic to the idea. In the first place, the concept lacks the universality characteristic of the doctrine of progress. The divine purpose was selective; human affairs were being directed for the benefit of "the chosen," variously regarded as members of the Jewish race, as righteous Jews alone, and, rarely, as the righteous of the whole earth. Even where this interpretation of history receives its most universal expression in scattered passages in the prophetic literature and the psalms, and in the literature of late Judaism, it is through the Jews that the kingdom is to come to pass, and it is the new Jerusalem which is to be the center of the new order.[1] On the whole the racial distinction was emphasized. History was being manipulated for the sake of the Jews and those proselytes who identified with them. Even in the later Christian expression of this interpretation of history a selective principle is at work in that it is the "saved" who are to

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[1]Cf. G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), Vol. I, Part I, chaps. i, vii, especially pp. 226 f.

benefit from the future age, not mankind as a whole. There was no notion of an upward trend in history in which all would participate regardless of religious status.

Secondly, the apocalyptic element in Jewish-Christian thought was antithetic to any idea of progress by natural, gradual development.[1] Progress there might be, but it would take place by mighty upheavals of the natural order through the operations of a miraculous power, and the Kingdom of God would represent not the culmination of an evolutionary process or the rational organization of society on the basis of natural law, but an abrupt break with the past in which nothing of the old would remain. "Catastrophe" and "miracle" were the key words, not "development" and "natural law." Obviously it was not man who would achieve the kingdom by virtue of his own innate goodness and developing powers but God who would bring it to pass, mysteriously, miraculously, by fiat as it were. Man's part was to do God's will that He might act more speedily. Thus even in the Jewish tradition with its high estimate of man as God's creation and chief concern, we find the note of resignation and the lack of confidence in natural means of accomplishment which had to be overcome before the doctrine of progress could captivate men's imaginations.

We turn now to a summary of the factors relevant to the idea of progress as they appear in the Christian synthesis of the Hellenic and Hebraic traditions, a development of thought and life extending from the primitive Christian communities through the Augustinian systematization of preceding lines of thought to its climax in the Summae of Thomas Aquinas. During all this period social conditions were distinctly unfavorable to any notion of progress. In the days of the declining Roman Empire it must have been well-nigh impossible to take the optimistic view of the outcome of world history necessary to the idea of progress. And in the medieval period there was nothing to further the notion of the value of change implicit in the idea of progress. To begin with, the people had no experience of social change in the modern use of the term. The majority were attached to the soil; hence there was no mobility of population. The economy was not a money

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[1]However, if it had not been for their apocalypticism it is doubtful if the Jews would have regarded history with any more optimism than the Greeks. Certainly there is little in their social and political experience on which to base an optimistic interpretation of the human scene.

economy; hence there was no mobility of goods. Social change, if it meant anything, meant the perpetuation of anarchical conditions that were highly undesirable. Thus the ideal of a permanent, stable, unchanging order was better suited to their experience than the idea of progress.

Nonetheless, there is much that is pertinent to the doctrine of progress in the medieval synthesis. Ideas were developed and attitudes inspired that, freed from their hampering context, were to come into their own under the improved social conditions and the intellectual ferment of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. In the first place, in Augustinian thought the cyclical interpretation of history characteristic of the Graeco-Roman world gave place to the unilinear and men's eyes at last turn hopefully to the future instead of regretfully to the past.[1] Secondly, man is regarded as of primary importance in the scheme of things. The earth, his home, is God's creation and the center of the universe; he, too, is God's creation, and the goal of history is his redemption.[2] Thirdly, the conception of the unity of mankind, an idea basic to the doctrine of progress, was furthered by the theological dogma that all men are one in their common descent from Adam and in their need of redemption,[3] by the ideal of a unified Christian civilization in which the medieval church showed herself a true descendant of Rome,[4] and by the persistence of the Stoic belief in the all pervasiveness, rationality and divine character of natural law, from which is implied the brotherhood of man, and which reinforced the concept of the universality of law as developed in Roman jurisprudence and continued in canon law.[5] The story of the gradual incorporation and increasing importance of this concept in Christian thought is of particular interest as

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[1]Flint, op. cit., p. 16.

[2]Thus did Christianity resist the Oriental doctrine that "matter" is essentially evil. In reference to the church as over against the world the phrase has a social rather than a cosmological significance. Cf. Troeltsch, op. cit., I, 158.

[3]Augustine De Civitate Dei xii. 21, 27.

[4]Flint, op. cit., p. 14; Bury, op. cit., pp. 23, 24.

[5]Flint, op. cit., pp. 50, 51.

the background of European rationalism, where, released from its ecclesiastical restraints, it became a cardinal tenet of the various theories of progress.[1]

In each case, however, the importance of the idea for a doctrine of progress is qualified, if not negated, by conflicting elements in the Christian synthesis. For instance, in the Augustinian philosophy of history the "earthiness" characteristic of its Jewish antecedent has given place to an otherworldliness definitely hostile to the idea of progress. Men dream not of the kingdom of God on earth but of a supra-mundane future to be apprehended in the mystic vision or to be attained after death as the reward of a good life.[2] Various factors have contributed to this transformation. Profound though it was in religious insight, the spiritualizing of the kingdom concept which took place in the early church opened the way to a dualism of flesh and spirit, of "the world" and "the kingdom" (compare second footnote, p. 34) in which Christianity was greatly influenced by the Oriental elements in the mystery cults and in Neoplatonism.[3] Further, the social experience of the Christians reinforced rather than checked this tendency since the treatment they received at the hands of the world was not such as to reduce their sense of its evil nature and lamentable destiny. As long as apocalypticism persisted, the kingdom concept retained something of a this worldly character but with the continued disappointment of millennial hopes it became the fashion to relegate the kingdom to life beyond the grave or to mystical experience of spiritual realities.[4]

In the second place, the importance of man in the scheme

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[1]Troeltsch, op. cit., I, 159, 160, 268.

[2]W. R. Inge, "The Idea of Progress," in Outspoken Essays (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1922), p. 178.

[3]Troeltsch, op. cit., I, 40, 238.

[4]This is not to condemn as valueless this mystical strain in Christian thought which enlisted some of the finest intellects and noblest personalities in the Graeco-Roman world in the service of Christianity and which was accompanied by much high ethical endeavor, but to point out that so long as mysticism emphasizes a basic antagonism between flesh and spirit and wishes to escape the earthly world for life in the heavenly it can have no traffic with the idea of progress as moderns conceive the term.

of things is not accompanied by any belief in his power to work out his own salvation. Quite the reverse is the case. Man is weak and sinful. By his own efforts he can accomplish nothing. It is God who does all things for him. Thus does medieval supernaturalism banish from men's minds any idea that they could by exercise of their own powers gradually appropriate an earthly destiny more acceptable than the life they were then experiencing.[1]

We need to remind ourselves, however, that the apparent quietism of this view of life was nullified, to what extent it is difficult to say, by the doctrine of regeneration. Man may be impotent and sinful in his own nature but he need not remain so, for the way of salvation is open and once he becomes a new creature he works with a power not his own. Never was this more true than in the medieval synthesis where the technique of salvation was so carefully worked out that men were in no doubt as to the means by which it might be achieved. We are at last coming to a fresh appreciation of the psychological value of this doctrine, as once again, dispossessed of a belief in progress and in their own abilities, we watch modern men searching a source of fresh power.

Finally, the conception of the unity of mankind as expressed in the doctrine of redemption and the ideal of the church universal was basically different from that set forth in the doctrine of progress as later developed. Flint makes a great point of his theory that in the West the idea of unity owes its existence to men's experience of external unity under the Roman empire and to their experience of spiritual unity in the medieval church with its emphasis on "the equality of all men before God, and the

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[1]Here it should be said that supernaturalism is not necessarily inimical to the idea of progress. Historically this doctrine was associated both with Deism and with the immanence theologies of the nineteenth century. Nor is there any fundamental logical contradiction once this-worldly goals are regarded as germane to the purpose of God. (Cf. E. W. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion [New York and London: Scribners, 1933].) But when the contrast between God and man is emphasized, when God works by miracle rather than in ways comprehensible to men, when God is good and men are evil, when God is wise and men are ignorant, when his kingdom is set over against the "world," a deprecation of the natural and of human effort occurs which is at the opposite pole from the modern concept of progress.

universal obligation of charity and justice."[1] Be that as it may, the ideal of unity as defined in the Christian synthesis is not the one set forth by the advocates of progress according to which the common denominator of human nature was defined in terms of a theory of natural rights based on men's common possession of reason rather than in terms of equality of need and of obligation.[2] The effect of this difference in definition is evident in the fact that far from contributing to a dynamic theory of society the medieval ideal of unity was the expression of the static and essentially aristocratic society of feudalism and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. As in Pauline thought the idea of Christian unity is not interpreted in terms of the removal of inequalities but of the acceptance of them as God ordained and as an opportunity for developing the "ethical values of personal relationships."[3] And, as in Aristotelian thought, inequalities are regarded as natural. Says Troeltsch: "Even in a man of such deep ethical feeling as St. Thomas it is amazing to see how unquestioningly he accepts the Aristotelian point of view that the aristocratic and ruling classes are the logical result of Nature."[4] As suggested above, far more important for the doctrine of progress was the persistence of Stoic rationalism in the theory of natural law, for it was from this root that the doctrine of progress was eventually to spring.

The next three centuries (fourteenth to seventeenth) witness various developments in thought, and changes in social conditions essential to the formulation of the doctrine of progress. Of primary importance among these is the rise of modern science originating on the one hand in the development of the empirical ideal of knowledge, on the other in improved methods of exact reasoning achieved by the mathematicians in the course of their study of Pythagorean Platonism and the work of the Arabians.[5] The empirical ideal of knowledge received its impetus from various

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[1]Flint, op. cit., pp. 14, 50-52.

[2]J. Salwyn Schapiro, Condorcet and the Rise of Liberalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1934), pp. 46, 47.

[3]Troeltsch, op. cit., I, 78. [4]Ibid., I, 298.

[5]C. W. Morris, "Renaissance Science," Public Lecture, University of Chicago, October, 1935.

sources. Even in the thirteenth century the ideal was emerging as shown by the interest in the natural world of two such diverse personalities as Roger Bacon and St. Francis of Assisi.[1] Further, nominalism in scholastic thought turned men's attention from consideration of absolutes to the observation of particulars.[2] And Thomas Aquinas in defining the sphere of natural law and according it a legitimate place as a source of knowledge opened the way to further study of the natural world. Says Dawson:

> It is true that St. Thomas had no intention of turning men's minds away from the spiritual world to the study of particular and contingent being. . . . . He regards the science of the sensible world merely as the lowest rung in a ladder which leads the mind step by step to the contemplation of eternal truth. Nevertheless the new appreciation of the rights of nature and reason which his philosophy involved marked a turning point in the history of European thought. . . . . As soon as the European mind began to exploit the riches of knowledge and power that the world contained, it began to turn away from the intellectualism of St. Thomas towards a purely rational or empirical ideal of knowledge.[3]

This budding intellectual interest in nature was freed from all scruples by the romantic abandon to the delights of nature, the intense interest in all the varied aspects of life characteristic of Renaissance humanism. Indeed, many writers regard the aesthetic enthusiasm of this period as the primary source of modern science, pointing out that it was the artist, as typified by Leonardo da Vinci, who "first realized the possibilities of . . . . the new science of experiment and applied knowledge which would give man the complete mastery over nature."[4] Certain it was that the urban, bourgeois civilization of the Renaissance furthered technological development and gave a place in the sun to the craftsman and the "magician," the real pioneers in the use of the experimental method.[5]

Whatever the causes, the effects of this scientific rebirth were of great significance for the doctrine of progress. In the realm of practical affairs the scientific discoveries arrived at by the empirical method gave men their first taste of what power over nature might mean, an experience which added to the develop-

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[1]Dawson, op. cit., p. 171. [2]Morris, op. cit.

[3]Dawson, op. cit., pp. 175-77. [4]Ibid., p. 183.

[5]Morris, op. cit.

ment of a more stable society than the Middle Ages afforded, the emergence of new indigenous cultures in the various national units, and the widened horizons resulting from the crusades and the explorations, provided the improvement in social conditions necessary as a basis for the doctrine of progress. And in the realm of ideas the scientific revolution gave new views of the world and of man's relations to it, which produced an "intellectual climate" favorable to the idea of progress. These new views were based on the belief in the stability of the laws of nature and in the solidarity of the natural sciences, hitherto regarded as separate and detached. It was now possible to have a notion of the continuity of the world, "unbroken by the interventions of the Deity and safe from the ravages of time."[1]

The classical revival which accompanied the scientific revolution also contributed to this "intellectual climate" in various ways. It gave men a new sense of the significance of the historic past, thus discrediting the narrow and rigid Christian scheme of history and laying the foundation for the later interpretation of history as an ongoing social process. Says Gooch:

> The revelation that the classical world was not a shadowy tradition but a brilliant reality stimulated curiosity and suggested the study of development. Comparative inquiry was further encouraged by the discovery of the New World and the establishment of closer relations with the East. Within the limits of a couple of generations the realm of space and the horizon of learning were doubled.[2]

Secondly, it supplemented the new aesthetic appreciation of the glories of nature and of man as a child of nature with tales of man's great accomplishments and "the rapturous seduction of pagan culture, at once beautiful, lofty and frankly human."[3] To be sure, the extravagant admiration for the past and the slavish attempts to imitate the ancients, which were also characteristic of the period, hindered the progress idea in that they fostered a tendency to undervalue the present and underestimate the possibilities of the future, but this was after all a passing phase

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[1]Schapiro, op. cit., p. 236.

[2]G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (2d ed.; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920), p. 2. See also "Progress," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

[3]Gooch, op. cit., p. 2.

and of less significance than the contribution to man's self confidence arising from the glorification of his past achievements. The backward glance could not prevail for long in a world of such expansiveness and joy.

The new temper of thought received expression also in the Utopian literature of the period, which prepared the way for the literature of social reform. As the successes of the new science encouraged men to attempt control of their physical environment, so the speculations of the Utopians stimulated them to wonder if the social environment might not also be controlled.[1] Men are dreaming of a new and better world to live in even if they have not yet set themselves for its accomplishment and social changes will result once the connection is made between Utopianism and the idea of progress.[2]

Thus we see the breakdown of the medieval world view in the development of science, in the free exultation in man and nature, in the dreams of a glorious "earthly city." Though the basic optimism of the Christian view of history remains,[3] the Augustinian scheme of history has been completely discredited wherever the new science is accepted. Belief in natural law is to replace belief in miraculous intervention; belief in reason is to replace belief in revelation; confidence in man's natural goodness and ability is to replace the doctrines of original sin and regeneration. Even the Reformation with its loyalty to the old world view hastened this development in so far as it gave a decisive blow to the authority of the church and consequently to its doctrines. Furthermore, Calvinism, for all its aristocratic cast, served the modern spirit well by providing powerful religious sanctions for the new attitude to the world in that it emphasized the duty of the elect to take the world for God.[4] Thus it freed its members from notions of withdrawal and resignation as valid social ideals.[5] Nor did this change in outlook bring with it any

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[1]J. O. Hertzler, History of Utopian Thought (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923), pp. 265-69.

[2]Ibid., chap. ix. [3]Dawson, op. cit., p. 190.

[4]Ernst Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Williams and Norgate; New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1912), pp. 62, 63, 114, 116.

[5]The results of the new freedom are well described in

sense of disillusionment and despair as might well have been the case. Man, after all, in the Copernican cosmology was displaced from "his proud position as the central figure and end of the universe, and made a tiny speck on a third rate planet revolving about a tenth rate sun drifting in an endless cosmic ocean."[1] But instead of bemoaning this lost security the men of the new era interpreted their humiliation as deliverance[2] and replaced the Christian epic with the secular doctrine of progress.

This doctrine was to receive many forms and to be associated with many and diverse ideas in the course of the next three centuries. We find it equally at home in the "machine universe" of Newton and the pulsing, changing world of Darwin. Physiocrats, socialists, communists, laissez faire economists, all expect "progress" to result from the adoption of their economic theories. "Enlightened despotism," constitutionalism, democracy alike are advocated as promoting progress. Those who would enjoy the simple life of the noble savage and those who admired the increasingly complex industrial civilization defended both positions in the name of progress. Historians read history to ascertain the conditions of progress, and whether they interpreted the past in terms of continuity or of dialectic found evidence of progress in human affairs. Psychologists and sociologists attempted to discover the laws of progress by the application of the scientific method to the study of man and his social evironment. Empiricists arrived at belief in progress by the inductive method; rationalists assumed it as one of those clear and incontestable ideas evident to the mind of man. It would seem that "all roads led to progress."

The fact is that the doctrine of progress provided an admirable interpretation of the social experience of men, and particularly of the rising bourgeoisie who set the tone of culture during these centuries. It was a concept useful both as an explanation of successes and as a lever for the achievement of

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Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress, and in R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1926).

[1]J. H. Randall, The Making of the Modern Mind (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936), p. 226.

[2]Bury, op. cit., p. 160.

goals. As the changing circumstances of life brought benefits to increasing numbers of people change came to be regarded as a good. As for those who lost in the struggle it was conceivable that the next turn of the wheel would bring them into their own. They thus placed their hope in progress and sanctified their demands in these terms. Specifically, we may point to the following circumstances as particularly conducive to the belief in progress: the new power over nature which was the gift of the new science and which brought about both a commercial and an industrial revolution; the rise of far flung colonial empires which served to increase, temporarily at least, the well being and power of the western nations; the existence of vast tracts of sparsely settled, rich lands, particularly in the Americas, which the oppressed of the western nations took for their own.

Study of the various forms of the doctrine which made their appearance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveals the chief criteria of progress to be two,--increase in knowledge, improved social organization. The doctrine was first formulated in terms of increase in knowledge. Lucretius' thesis that the history of man gives evidence of a steady advance in the skills and in knowledge was revived by Bodin in the latter half of the sixteenth century,[1] and carried on in the seventeenth in debates between the champions of the ancients and the moderns.[2] The moderns were victorious and as a result the intellectuals ceased looking to the past as the age of all great things and began to rejoice in the growth in scientific knowledge which was so evident a characteristic of their own time. This was far from being a full fledged idea of progress, however, for questions of moral and social improvement were not taken into consideration, nor was the belief in the growth of knowledge projected into the future.[3] Furthermore, the scorn in which the medieval period was

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[1] Les six livres de la république (1576); Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem (1566); cf. Bury, op. cit., pp. 37-44.

[2] Bury, op. cit., chaps. iv, v.

[3] The treatment of human history as analogous to the life span of the individual illuminates this point. Rarely was the seventeenth century regarded by these writers as the youth of the world, but instead as the mature or ageing person from whom further progress was not to be expected.

generally held militated against any genuine historic sense of the continuity of events. Thus the controversy represents chiefly a reaction from an unbounded admiration for the learning of the classical world, to an equally extravagant admiration for contemporary achievements.[1] However, in 1737, we find Abbé de Saint Pierre writing of progress in terms of improved social organization,[2] and by the end of the eighteenth century the belief in social progress had become a generally accepted and widely debated idea among the intellectuals of western Europe. We shall analyze the doctrine as it appeared under the aegis of rationalism, of British empiricism, of German romanticism.

The following groups may be distinguished as contributing to the idea of progress in eighteenth century French thought: There were the historians, notably Motesquieu,[3] Turgot,[4] Voltaire,[5] Chastellux,[6] Condorcet,[7] who sought to find evidence

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[1]Nonetheless, this notion of progress as involving increase in knowledge is of great significance because it carried over into eighteenth century thought in the tendency to regard intellectual enlightenment as the criterion of social progress. The belief that increase in knowledge would necessarily result in improved social conditions was and is a cause of much confusion of thought on social issues.

[2]Observations sur le progrès continuel de la raison universelle (1737). Cf. Bury, op. cit., chap. vi.

[3]De l'esprit des lois (1748). Though not an apostle of progress, he attempted to apply the concept of law to historical events, thus suggesting to his contemporaries a possible basis for the control of society. Cf. Bury, op. cit., pp. 145-48.

[4]Discourses at the Sorbonne (1750). He developed in detail the thesis that all the experiences of the race, failures as well as successes can be shown to have their place in the upward trend of history. Cf. Bury, op. cit., pp. 153-58.

[5]Siècle de Louis XIV (1751); Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations (1745-51). He was a powerful propagandist for the idea that wars and religions are the chief obstacles to progress, and that the application of reason to the problems of society is the only means for its improvement. Bury, op. cit., pp. 148-53.

[6]De la félicité publique (1772). He anticipated the utilitarians in emphasizing public happiness as the criterion by which to judge civilizations and argues for progress on the basis that public happiness has increased with enlightenment. Bury, op. cit., pp. 186-91.

[7]l'Esquisse d'un tableau historique des Progrès de

for and the means to progress in the study of past events and of contemporary civilizations. There were the physiocrats, Quesnay, Mirabeau, Mercier and others, whose articles in the Tableau economique stressed the point of view that increase in wealth is the condition of social progress and that progress thus depends on protection of property rights and liberty for the individual to use and extend his possessions as he will.[1] There were the "psychologists," Diderot,[2] Helvétius,[3] d'Holbach,[4] who developed the theory of the infinite perfectibility of man on the basis of the sensationalism of Locke and Condillac, thereby strengthening the position of the advocates of social progress by indicating the "scientific" grounds of its achievement.[5] Finally there was Rousseau[6] whose romanticism sets him apart from his rationalist contemporaries and whose brilliant and paradoxical writings defy generalization.[7] The least that can be said is that his belief in the natural goodness of men admirably supplemented the rationalists' confidence in men's reason as the basis of progress, and had great popular appeal. It is due largely to his faith in the common man and confidence in education that progress came to be associated with the ideals of equality and democracy rather than defined in terms of an intellectual aristocracy.

But at first glance eighteenth century rationalism with its mechanical view of nature does not seem to offer a fertile

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l'esprit humain (1793). Condorcet was the great prophet of progress. He not only traced the upward course of civilization in the past but attempted to forecast and describe the glorious future of humanity, a future that is just at hand and that will be realized with the spread of enlightenment. Bury, op. cit., pp. 206-15.

[1]Bury, op. cit., pp. 172-76; Kingsley Martin, French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929), pp. 228-35.

[2]Thoughts on the Interpretation of Nature (1754).

[3]De l'Esprit (1758).

[4]Le Systeme de la Nature (1770); Systeme social (1773).

[5]Bury, op. cit., 159-72; Martin, op. cit., chap. vii.

[6]Discours sur l'inegalite (1750); Contrat Social (1762).

[7]Martin, op. cit., chap. viii.

soil for the growth of the idea of progress. How then was belief in progress justified in terms of this philosophy? According to the Newtonian cosmology the physical world can be described as a neatly ordered, intelligible complex of matter in motion in which the course of every particle is fixed in accordance with certain eternal, immutable, universal and uniform natural laws. These laws are simple and easy of comprehension and can be known by all men through the exercise of reason.[1] From the evidences of the operation of natural law in the physical world the philosophers then jumped to the assumption that similar laws should be operative in the world of human relationships.[2] And from the perfect harmony associated with the working of natural laws they inferred that the cause of chaos and suffering in this most perfect of all worlds lay in "unnatural behavior," i.e., behavior at variance with the operation of natural laws. Thus if the natural laws relevant to society could be discovered and social institutions modified in terms of them, the perfect society would be achieved,[3] an idea characteristic of Roman jurisprudence and developed by Thomas Aquinas.

These laws they claimed to discover by the same methods used in the physical sciences,--abstraction from certain simple, repetitive elements in experience. To obtain the necessary data they turned on the one hand to a study of history[4] and on the other to a study of primitive peoples who were presumably nearer the "natural state" than civilized man.[5] By this procedure they hoped to "identify, enumerate, and describe the qualities that were common to all men in order to determine what ideas and cus-

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[1]Randall, op. cit., chap. xi.

[2]Schapiro, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

[3]Teggart, op. cit., pp. 81 f.

[4]Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 95. In illustration of this attitude toward history he quotes from Hume as follows: "Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature" (Essays, II, 94).

[5]Lois Whitney, Primitivism and the Idea of Progress in English Popular Literature of the Eighteenth Century (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934).

toms and institutions in their own time were out of harmony with the universal natural order."[1] Their conclusions are embodied in the theory of natural rights which may be summed up as follows: All men are equal by virtue of possessing reason. Hence they have equal rights to happiness which depends upon liberty, property, security, and freedom from oppression. Hence church, state, and guild were regarded as obstacles to progress, and the theory fitted in nicely with the demands of the rising bourgeoisie for ". . . . freedom of enterprise, freedom of labor, freedom of contract, individual initiative, and the reduction and simplification of the taxes."[2]

This theory of progress as resulting from the discovery and application of the natural laws relative to society received valuable support from the psychology of Locke, for sensationalism made environment all important in the development of personality. It thus served to free men from the doctrine of original sin and its secular counterpart, the Machiavellian theory of government, and it banished the notion of the persistence of innate ideas binding men to certain ways of thinking. No longer could it be said that progress was impossible because of the corrupt or the unchanging character of human nature. On the positive side sensationalism gave support to the doctrine of equality, for difference in environment appears as the sole cause of differences in people since each individual's mind is at birth a tabula rasa. Thus it seemed to indicate that social progress could be brought about by the right kind of education.[3]

In spite of its scientific pretensions, however, even a cursory study of the rationalistic theory of progress shows it to be far from scientific even when judged by the standards of the time. The careful investigations of a Kepler, a Galileo, a Newton, are not comparable to the conclusions arrived at by the rationalist reformers on the basis of a few hasty generalizations. While the ideal was that of the science of their time,--the discovery of simple, uniform, universal laws,--the method used was not the inductive one but rather that of Descartes, or better, of the mediaeval realists, i.e., deduction from certain axioms which seemed

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[1]Becker, op. cit., p. 88. [2]Schapiro, op. cit., p. 36.

[3]Randall, op. cit., pp. 315, 316.

as clear and indubitable to their minds as mathematical postulates. Voltaire's statement that his aim was "to paint not the actions of a single man, but the mind of men (l'esprit des hommes)"[1] illustrates the tendency to depend on abstractions rather than to make a genuine study of empirical evidence. As Cobban points out:

> Now an eighteenth-century law was by no means the scientific law or working hypothesis as it is conceived to-day. It was a peculiar and quite illegitimate hybrid of empiricism and rationalism; in it the deductive method, lately expelled with contumely by Locke's empiricism, returned triumphantly under the aegis of natural philosophy. For the branch of scientific study which had most influence on the philosophes was mathematical astronomy, which to the mind without scientific training might easily seem to follow a deductive method. Voltaire, as a dabbler in chemistry and a natural sceptic, inclined to shun general views, but most of the philosophes in their attempt to introduce the rule of law in other fields than that of physical science fell back on deduction. In fact their laws of nature were little more than chance guesses taken as universal principles.[2]

Thus while belief in progress was really the outgrowth of Cartesian confidence in reason and in abstractions arrived at by deduction, it appeared to be scientific in the empirical inductive sense, because of the analogy drawn between natural rights and natural law, and the adoption of the scientific criteria of simplicity and uniformity, which, as the reformers used them, were not scientific at all.

This unrealized discrepancy between aim and method accounts for the many inconsistencies in the doctrine of progress as developed in eighteenth century France, and, indeed, for its very appearance. Logically, in the absence of a concept of evolution and of a "law of progress" as the nineteenth century conceived it, sensationalism and the belief in the all embracing character of natural law should have led (and did lead in the writings of La Mettrie, d'Holbach and others) to a materialistic determinism precluding any possibility of change in society.[3]

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[1]Bury, op. cit., p. 149.

[2]Alfred Cobban, Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1929), p. 28. Cf. Becker, op. cit., pp. 102, 103; Jules Delvaille, Essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de progrès (Paris: F. Alcan, 1910), pp. 414, 415.

[3]Cobban, op. cit., p. 32.

But the "progressivists" did not press to its logical conclusion their analogy between society and the physical world. They emphasized only that in the thought of their day which fitted in with the need of reform and with their experience of new powers. From their belief in the perfection of natural law, incidentally a heritage of the religion against which they railed, they inferred the desirability of organizing life in terms of this law; from sensationalism they inferred the infinite malleability of man and consequently the perfectibility of society; and from the notion of the invariability of natural law they inferred the static character of society and hence the necessity of revolutionary action as a prelude to the change desired. It took the French revolution to make the intellectualist reformers realize the inadequacy of their knowledge and to set them at the task of developing a genuine social science better adapted to discover and deal with the facts of social experience.

Eighteenth century French thought, then, gives us the best illustration of the idea of progress as developed in dependence upon rationalism. No such clear-cut formulation is to be observed in England, although there are examples of the purely rationalistic version described, notably in the work of Godwin,[1] Price,[2] and Paine.[3] But in both England and Germany rationalism was qualified by the religious reaction against Deism, challenged by the scepticism of Hume and diluted with genuinely romantic[4] and empirical elements providing a different basis and giving a different direction to the idea of progress. Without noting this fact we cannot understand the transformation of the idea of progress from a revolutionary slogan, an apocalyptic vision (as it appears in Condorcet, for example) to a doctrine of the continuous and inevitable growth of society in the direction of ever

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[1] *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (1793). Cf. Bury, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-27.

[2] *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution* (1784); *The Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement in the State of Mankind* (1787).

[3] *Common Sense* (1776); *Rights of Man*.

[4] Rousseau's influence upon Kant, for example, has more significance than his influence upon eighteenth century French thought so far as the idea of progress is concerned.

greater diversity and complexity of organization.

Among the earliest formulations of the doctrine of progress in England are those to be found in the writings of certain Anglican clergymen.[1] It is a curious fact that whereas in France it was the deists who emphasized the idea of progress to justify their opposition to the historic religious tradition, in England it was the representatives of the church who found it a useful weapon for combating deism. The argument ran as follows: Against the deistic assertion that "any religion necessary to salvation must be one that has always and everywhere been known to men,"[2] they set the doctrine of the progressive revelation of the truths of religion. The truths themselves are eternal but they have been made known to men according to their capacity to receive them and since there is no reason to suppose that man has reached the apex of his development, further revelations may be expected in the future. Furthermore, not only has there been progress in religious knowledge, but in the material conditions of life and even in moral conduct a development not only continuous but inevitable since God is good. "Surely He who is Goodness itself . . . . will heal all the Maladies and Evils of the World, and convert every Thing into Good."[3]

The importance of this line of thought must not be underestimated even though developed by comparatively few men. In the first place, a way was found to reconcile the idea of progress with Christian eschatology, by indicating that it could be regarded as descriptive of the period between the Fall and the Millennium.[4] Secondly, the logical relationship between the idea of progress and the universal truths of which the rationalists were fond was clarified by the distinction made between the "eternal, immutable perfect Rule which results from the Reason of Things" and "the ability of actual human beings to discover through their

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[1] R. S. Crane, "Anglican Apologetics and the Idea of Progress," Modern Philology, Vol. XXXI, 1934. The following works are analyzed in detail: John Edwards, A Compleat History or Survey of All the Dispensations and Methods of Religion . . . . (1699); William Worthington, An Essay on . . . . Man's Redemption (1743); Edward Law, Considerations of the State of the World (1745).

[2] Crane, op. cit., p. 282.

[3] Ibid., p. 300.

[4] Ibid., pp. 286 f.

ordinary mental faculties what this rule is."[1] This distinction was important for the attempts of idealists to reconcile the eternal and the temporal, the absolute and the relative. Finally, and most important of all, it furthered the formulation early in the eighteenth century of an idea of progress based on the notion of growth and diversity instead of one bound to the primitivistic notions of simplicity and uniformity.[2]

The religious tradition also nurtured another group of men whose thought had implications for the idea of progress, namely, the Cambridge Platonists. Their belief that morality was the result of an inherent goodness in men[3] rather than derived from the operations of reason was to have far reaching consequences in the thought of the eighteenth century. As developed by Shaftesbury,

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[1] Ibid., p. 354.

[2] Cf. ibid., pp. 368, 369: ". . . . he [Edward Law] presented the phenomenon of progress in religion as something that could be explained in terms of human nature itself. The formula he used was not his own--he found it ready-made in the principle of association as formulated by Gay. But he had the merit of being perhaps the first writer in the eighteenth century who applied this new theory of the mind in any thoroughgoing way to the interpretation of human history; and over twenty years more were to elapse before he had, in Joseph Priestley, a successor who understood its significance as completely as he. Again, as a result largely of this same preoccupation with psychology, he succeeded in integrating the evolution of religious ideas more thoroughly than had been done before into a comprehensive scheme of history in which, because of the necessary interconnectedness of all forms of knowledge, progress became a general law of human life. . . . . And finally . . . . he set forth his doctrine of the 'continual improvement of the world in general' with a consistent awareness of some of its revolutionary implications for which there were few precedents among the theorists of progress before his time. He had completely emancipated himself, for example, from the old illusions about the superiority of the simple to the complex; not once did he lapse . . . . into primitivistic eulogies of early men. . . . . Nor was he any less explicit on another point which was perhaps of all the implications of the idea of progress the one hardest for the eighteenth century to assimilate. If religion, he wrote, has hitherto been really progressive, we find good reason to expect the same still farther. And that means, he went on that it is absurd to try to fix it within limits determined by what it has been in any preceding stage of its evolution. In short he had committed himself, to a view of man's career in the world which . . . . found a positive value in diversity, relativity and temporal change."

[3] G. P. H. Pawson, The Cambridge Platonists (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), p. 79.

Hutcheson and the moral sense school, it provided a non-rationalistic basis for belief in progress,[1] and supplemented the arguments of the rationalists by providing an answer to Hobbes' theory that men are by nature selfish and grasping. Possibly, too, it is to be noted in Hume's ethics of feeling, although his position is more likely derived from his skepticism of rationalism than from any romantic belief in the goodness of men. Finally, with Adam Smith and the Utilitarians it became the very mechanism of social progress since the sentiments of sympathy and benevolence were regarded as the link between self interest and the public good.[2] Thus, this theory of man reinforced the laissez faire philosophy of those who saw in the free interplay of individuals the conditions for the gradual achievement of social progress.

Not only was the doctrine of progress in England qualified by the religious reaction and by the prominence of the moral sense school of thought but, most important of all, it received a different slant because of the empirical temper of British thought. Hume's skepticism was sufficiently disturbing to prevent the majority of English intellectuals from giving wholehearted allegiance to the series of abstractions about society in which the French revolutionaries believed so implicitly,--a skepticism to which the actual events of the French revolution gave point. Secondly, the beginnings of a genuinely empirical social science in the thought of the Utilitarians led to the abandonment of the principles of simplicity and uniformity which had resulted in so many curious combinations of progressivism and primitivism, and left the way clear for the formulation of the doctrine of progress in terms of the increasingly complex industrial society of the time.[3] Finally, the development of an evolutionary theory based

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[1]It can also serve as a basis for primitivism as Whitney has pointed out (op. cit., chap. iii).

[2]There are two types of Utilitarianism, however. The Mandevillain and Benthamite type depended on the theory of the identification of selfish and social interests whereas the Hume-Smith draws on the sentiment of sympathy as stated above.

[3]They combined associationism with the doctrine of social utility, thus preserving the theory of the mechanism of social progress without any attempt to confine it to a priori theories of government and social organization. Cf. Randall, op. cit., p. 359.

on the chain of being hypothesis cleared the ground for the new metaphysics of science in terms of which the nineteenth century doctrine of progress was to be defined.[1]

In German thought the idea of progress takes yet a different turn due largely to the fact that it was not formulated until near the close of the eighteenth century when the enlightenment coalesced with romanticism. As knowledge of the tenets of rationalism was necessary to appreciate the dominant French version of the idea of progress, and of empiricism for the English contributions, so the peculiar characteristics of the German versions cannot be understood apart from the influence of romanticism. The aspect of romanticism of primary importance for the idea of progress is to be found in the new world view which it stimulated. If rationalism tended to reduce individual experience to the terms of the mechanically ordered physical world, romanticism went to the other extreme and based its interpretation of the external world on the inner experience of the individual. Thus if the dominant emotion of the individual was response to beauty, or love of order and justice, or, as with the pietists, a sense of the immediate presence of the divine, he reasoned that there was that in the world capable of calling out these feelings and that the world therefore was a world of beauty, of justice and order, or instinct with the divine. If conflict characterized his inner experience this, too, was projected into the outer world and it be-

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[1]Adam Ferguson, Essay on the History of Civil Society (1762); Principles of Moral and Political Science (1792); Erasmus Darwin, Zoonomia (1794-1796); Botanic Garden (1791); Temple of Nature (1803). The chain of being hypothesis was one of the cardinal assumptions of seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalism. According to it, all forms of life can be arranged in a continuous series graduating from lower species to higher and illustrative of the perfection of design of our world as it came from the hands of the creator. There was no idea of development in this continuous series, however, for the principles of final causality and of the immutability of the species were assumed as basic to the theory. But, as Whitney points out, "When . . . . the chief emphasis . . . . was thrown . . . . on the idea of movement upward within each species toward the greater perfection of the next species, the doctrine provided a favorable environment for a theory of progress in man apart from any evolutionary idea. Finally, in spite of the fact that the conception of the chain is logically antagonistic to the larger doctrine of evolution by virtue of its allegiance to immutable species and design, it provided a fertile soil for that doctrine by its very work of classification and gradation which called attention to the smallness of the difference between one species and another and especially between the highest animals and man" (op. cit., pp. 145-56).

came a world of struggle and ceaseless flux. Eventually this analogy was pushed to the point where human life and nature as a whole were regarded after the manner of the individual as a growing organism infused with an animating consciousness.[1]

Three strains of thought resulted from this world view relevant to the idea of progress. In the first place, the notion of the world as analogous to a growing organism furthered the development of the new evolutionary science, whose beginnings we have already noted and which to later generations appeared to provide scientific evidence for the idea of progress as inherent in the structure of life. Secondly, it stimulated a new interest in history and changed the character of historical study from an attempt to discover the universal truths about mankind to a study of the genesis and development of social institutions, and was ultimately productive of the genetic interpretation of history as set forth by Lamprecht and Dilthey at the close of the nineteenth century. This conception of continuity and development in history naturally "coalesced with the rationalistic conception of progress."

> . . . . Together they led to an emphasis on the ceaseless change of human institutions, on the value of each stage and on the necessity of further alteration. Crude attacks on the old and bitter hostility to the new were both deprecated; history revealed the steady march of mankind toward some far off divine event.[2]

Finally the new world view readmitted the doctrine of Providence as an active principle in the world. From the Deistic conception of God as a great first cause wholly outside his creation, men shifted to a conception of God as immanent in the world order, acting as the unifying principle of all the diverse forms of life, and giving purpose to what would otherwise appear as mere random activity. Progress thus became associated with the working of the immanent divine will. Not only did nature support progress, and history give evidence of it but God himself was bringing it to pass. As to just what the goal of this progress was, however, there was no very great agreement.

With this introduction we return to a summary of the doctrine of progress as it appears in German thought at the turn of

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[1] Randall, op. cit., chap. xvi.

[2] Ibid., p. 418.

the eighteenth century.[1] At the outset Lessing, though a rationalist, sounded the religious note characteristic of the German versions. The meaning of history, he thought, was to be found in the progressive revelation of God as given in the various religions, and the goal of history he described as the "full comprehension of God."[2] Herder, on the contrary, took the position of the romantic humanists and envisioned the goal of history as the development of the perfect man,[3] a development to be achieved not primarily as the result of man's efforts but by the gradual, "natural" improvement of the environmental conditions which mold his character. Herder's optimistic determinism and his glorification of man thus makes him a true forerunner of the nineteenth century advocates of progress.

But especially in Kant is the shift of the line of argument from rationalistic to romantic premises in evidence, though his theory of knowledge prevents him from becoming a thoroughgoing romanticist. He defined progress in terms of moral amelioration and placed his hope for its achievement in the moral imperative. Thus his doctrine of progress is derived, in romantic fashion, from an interpretation of the inner experience of the individual, in this case, his innate sense of duty to his fellows and to posterity. The connection with rationalism is also maintained in that the sense of moral obligation is considered an aspect of the rational nature of man. But it is clear that the achievement of a just world order cannot rest wholly on the spontaneous and random functioning of the separate ethical impulses

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[1]G. E. Lessing, Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts (1780); J. G. Herder, Briefe zur Beforderung der Humanitat (1774), Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menscheit (1774); Kant, Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte im weltburgerlicher Absicht (1784); J.C.F. von Schiller, What is Universal History? (1789); J. G. Fichte, Die Grundzuge des gegenwartigen Zeitalters (1806); F.W.J. von Schelling, Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur (1797), Von der Weltsiele (1798); F. von Schlegel, Ueber der neuere Geschichte (1808); Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes (1807), Philosophy of History (1823-1827), cf. Bury, op. cit., chap. xiii.

[2]Bury, op. cit., pp. 238-40.

[3]Ibid., p. 241. He quotes Herder as follows: "The flower of humanity, captive still in its germ, will blossom out one day into the true form of man like unto God, in a state of which no terrestrial man can imagine the greatness and the majesty."

of individuals. These exist and are basic but they must receive impetus, unification and direction. Therefore, since the logic of his major premise demands it, Kant exalts the inner experience of the individual to cosmic significance and postulates the existence of Providence as the unifying, sustaining factor of moral activity and of moral progress through the centuries, a Providence immanent in the universe and in human history, not separate from them as in Deism.

Further, Kant emphasized the fact that non-moral activities may serve as instruments of moral achievement since they result in conditions such that moral action becomes imperative.[1] For example, rivalries between nations will ultimately stimulate the formation of a universal society since it will become increasingly clear that the perpetuation of international conflict is self destructive, and that in the universal state alone will it be possible for men to treat their fellows always as ends and never as means.[2] Thus he suggests that the pervasive tendency toward the good, i.e., Providence, works through all the events of history regardless of their intrinsic character.

Fichte and Hegel also employed subjective experience as a clue to the nature of the external world, but whereas Kant recognized the hypothetical and speculative character of this method, the idealists regarded their conclusions as having objective validity. To Fichte the conflict between good and evil in the individual soul was duplicated on a cosmic scale in the world, and, as in the individual, growth of character results from the overcoming of obstacles, so in the world the struggle of the Cosmic Will to overcome obstacles to the good is leading to ever higher levels of existence. The goal of this struggle, in the world as in the individual, is the achievement of freedom, i.e., capacity for conscious rational action at all times. Such a goal is intrinsically unattainable, yet the course of history is one of progress in that direction. Progress is thus defined in terms of

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[1]Flint, op. cit., p. 391: "Man wishes peace, but Nature progress, and progress involves antagonism, conflict."

[2]Ibid., p. 393: "The history of the human race may be regarded as the accomplishment of a secret plan of Nature to produce a perfect political constitution . . . . as the only condition which can give scope for the complete development of all the faculties with which humanity has been endowed."

the world struggle for the accomplishment of freedom.

Randall's summary of Hegel's position is brief and to the point:

> For Hegel, the all-important thing in man is the growth of his spirit, the process of thinking that involves a continual revision and abandonment of the old. Hence the world itself, the whole of existence, is at bottom just such a process of thinking. Not reason, in the sense of some static organ for picturing the world, not logic in the sense of some system of fixed laws, but dialectic, the very process of thinking, is the supreme reality in man and nature. Being, the world, the totality of all things, the absolute--this is in essence a great process of Becoming. . . . . Every institution is the march through time of the Absolute Spirit realizing itself. For the world, as for Goethe's Faust, life is a continual striving after some never-attained goal; its meaning and significance lie in the striving itself . . . . everything that exists is a necessary moment in the advance to something further.[1]

In Hegel's system, therefore, progress was identified with the dialectic process by which the Eternal World Spirit was realizing itself in time. In a sense this means that he had no real doctrine of progress since all is predetermined and history is merely the unfolding of potentialities inherent in the World Soul from the beginning.

> Universal history is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially. And as the germ bears in itself the whole nature of the tree, and the taste and form of its fruits, so do the first traces of Spirit virtually contain the whole of that history.[2]

There must be the possibility of the development of genuinely new forms of life if progress is to be a reality. Yet the notions of continuity and of movement have been applied to history and progress identified with this structural development. Thus only the evolutionary theory is lacking for a concept of progress on a scale more vast than any conceived by the eighteenth century.

It is evident that the line of thought in Germany at the turn of the century presents great contrasts to the doctrine of progress as formulated under the aegis of eighteenth century rationalism and empiricism, and is indeed more characteristic of

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[1]Randall, op. cit., pp. 418, 419.

[2]Hegel, Philosophy of History, quoted by Randall, op. cit., p. 419.

the thought of the nineteenth century than of the eighteenth. Progress has come to be equated neither with increase in knowledge nor with social improvement, but has been read into the very structure of history. Thus a determinism, implicit but not agreeable under the rationalistic world view, is quite acceptable in the romantic since provision is made for social change as in the nature of things. This determinism, of course, precludes any attempt to discover the laws of progress with the idea of changing society to accord with them. Instead men are expected to have faith that the world process is working toward some desirable goal envisioned vaguely, if at all, and that their part is simply to discover the drift of history and go with it. Thus the ethical strenuousness characteristic of the earlier doctrines has vanished since the better future assumed is neither "clearly imagined nor deliberately willed."[1]

The above analysis of the origins of the doctrine of progress makes it clear that by the beginning of the nineteenth century the main lines of its development were laid. The subsequent history of the doctrine is primarily a carrying forward of the various versions noted, against the background of a world in which change and time are the great realities. French rationalism issued in the science of sociology whose initial exponents, notably Saint-Simon, and Auguste Comte, hoped to develop by inductive methods a science of social relations indicative of the true laws of social progress.[2] British empiricism resulted on the one hand in the progressive social philosophy of liberalism as represented by Bentham, J. S. Mill, the Tractarians, the Fabians,[3] and on the

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[1]Martin, op. cit., p. 278.

[2]Bury, op. cit., chaps. xv, xvi.

[3]L. T. Hobhouse, Liberalism (New York: Henry Holt & Co., n.d.). According to liberalism the goal of progress is to be understood as the achievement of conditions hospitable to the fullest development of the individual, and the growth of industry and of scientific knowledge are seen as contributory to this development. Starting with the theory of natural rights and the mutual harmony of individual and social needs, the liberals arrived, via the greatest happiness principle of Bentham, at the socialism of J. S. Mill, a trend whose practical effects are evident in the history of British social legislation. Thus whereas in the eighteenth century liberals thought to achieve their desired goals by the removal of governmental restrictions on individual activity, by the middle of the nineteenth they are looking

other in the theories of biological and social evolution set forth by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. From Spencer came perhaps the most grandiose exposition of the doctrine of progress ever formulated, for confusing the hope of progress with the fact of biological and social change he identified progress with the course of human history, with biological evolution, and indeed with the structure of the universe itself.[1] Finally German romanticism through its glorification of national origins, customs and history gave rise to various nationalistic theories of progress, and German idealism with its emphasis on the dialectic character of historical development provided the logical structure for the economic theories of Karl Marx.[2]

But, as Dawson observes, if the nineteenth century was the century of hope it was also the century of disillusion,--a disillusion in part the result of the changing circumstances of

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to government as a means for the protection of the rights of the individual and for the promotion of the conditions necessary for his efficient functioning.

[1]Cf. Randall, op. cit., p. 441. He quotes Herbert Spencer as follows: "Whether it be in the development of the Earth, in the development of Life upon its surface, in the development of Society, of God, of Manufactures, of Commerce, of Language, Literature, Science, Art, this same evolution of the simple into the complex, through successive differentiations holds throughout. From the earliest traceable cosmical changes, down to the latest results of civilization, we shall find that the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous is that in which Progress essentially consists. Progress is not an accident but a necessity. What we call evil and immorality must disappear. It is certain that man must become perfect. . . . . The ultimate development of the ideal man is certain--as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die. . . . . Always toward perfection is the mighty movement--towards a complete development and a more unmixed good."

[2]Marx followed Hegel in maintaining that history has the character of dialectical necessity, but he departed from him radically in asserting that the compulsive element is to be found not in the irresistible activity of Divine Reason but in economic forces, or, specifically, in the class struggle for economic supremacy, a struggle which is to end ultimately in the equalization of economic goods in the classless society. This materialistic interpretation of history is fully in line with the naturalistic temper of the time, and the emphasis on conflict as the mechanism of progress smacks not only of Hegel but of the Darwinian slogan of the survival of the fittest, used alike but with widely different connotations by both Marxians and laissez faire economists.

life involved in the end of the era of world expansion and the unsolved problems of the new industrial order, in part the result of the development of philosophy along lines seemingly at variance with the fundamental tenets of the doctrine of progress.[1] Early in the century Schopenhauer, by conceiving the world process after the analogy of unsatisfied desire,[2] had demonstrated that idealism could be turned to the ends of a pessimistic interpretation of life as well as an optimistic. Later his preoccupation with the irrational elements in existence appeared justified by the evidence of Marxian economics, Freudian psychology, and vitalistic biology. As the implications of this development toward irrationalism became clear it was less easy to believe in progress. Not that irrationalism is necessarily antithetical to such belief--indeed it became the basis of the Bergsonian version of the doctrine--but that it raises insistent questions as to the nature and existence of purpose in the world process, and therefore offers potential difficulty to any teleological theory of development such as the idea of progress.[3]

But idealism was not the only philosophical theory which could be turned to the interests of pessimism. Rationalism, too, led to a pessimistic world view when the implications of mechanistic determinism became apparent. Sociology, which had started out to discover the laws of progress with the hope of achieving a better society, led to a social behaviorism which, coupled with the mechanistic assumptions of the biological and physical sciences, gave rise anew to the problem of the existence and nature of change. For if the world process can be described in terms of a mechanical complex of activities the pre-determined character of life is evident, and all hope for the genuinely new, i.e., the unpredictable, vanishes. On the basis of deistic assumptions concerning the beneficent purpose animating the whole, such a determinism may support a theory of progress. But, if the non-

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[1]Dawson, op. cit., pp. 201 f.

[2]E. Von Hartmann's theory that the world process was due largely to the unconscious operations of reason also contributed to the development of irrationalism.

[3]The philosophy of pragmatism represents a definite attempt to adjust to this problem in such a way as to avoid the pitfalls of skepticism and pessimism.

moral character of the evolutionary process is maintained and human freedom is denied, a revival of the cyclical interpretation of history would seem to be in order. Indeed the second law of thermo dynamics would seem to point to the theory of progressive degeneration.[1]

Such is the situation with respect to the doctrine of progress at the close of the century. The problems of social adjustment are so great and so perplexing that an opportunistic philosophy of progress such as that offered by liberalism seems both an insufficient guide and a precarious foundation for sustained effort. On the other hand, there is lacking any clear cut metaphysics of progress in terms of idealism or of scientific rationalism such as that held by the men of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus the history of the doctrine has revealed the bases of our contention that a re-thinking of the doctrine of progress in terms of contemporary thought must be undertaken if it is to continue to serve as a philosophy of action, and as the basis of a positive approach to life. Therefore we now turn to a systematic analysis of the present status of the doctrine of progress.

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[1] Dawson, op. cit., pp. 21 f., 222 f. The reappearance of the doctrine of cycles in Nietzsche and Spengler, and the despairing cry of Bertrand Russell's A Free Man's Worship may be cited as evidence of this revival of historical pessimism.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEMATIC STATUS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PROGRESS

One of the most interesting aspects of contemporary thought is the widespread reaction against the doctrine of progress. Thanks to the mood of disillusionment which has prevailed since the war, the doctrine has been subjected to frequent critical scrutiny, with the result that the realization of the difficulties implicit in the idea has led in many quarters to its abandonment. In order to evaluate this reaction it is necessary to achieve some understanding of the nature of the problems at issue. Hence it is our aim in this chapter to present a systematic analysis of the doctrine in its problematical aspects.

The nature of one's approach to the problem is determined by three factors: the criterion of judgment selected, the time span within which it is applied, and the area,--geographical, racial or cosmic,--which is analyzed. For instance, it makes a great deal of difference whether the question under discussion is of progress in technology in the last century in America, of progress in scientific knowledge during the recorded history of western civilization, of progress in the intellectual capacity of the genus man since the time of homo sapiens, or of progress in an all-embracing perfection in the "whole creation" from the beginning of time.[1] It is evident that the main line of division will fall between those who limit their discussion to a particular kind of progress in a specific instance, and those interested in the problem of universal progress. The former emphasize that progress, like any other value judgment, can only be described in terms of a relativistic ethic and a pluralistic metaphysic; the latter will insist on the necessity of considering the doctrine from the standpoint of absolute value and universal being.[2] In

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[1]Cf. "Progress," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

[2]Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, Translator's Preface to Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932), pp. xv, xvi.

this chapter we shall approach the problem first from the relativistic angle and then from the universal.

The doctrine of progress is largely a product of western thought during the last three centuries. Hence the focal point of most discussions of progress is western civilization and the time span that of recorded history. Probably the norm most commonly employed is that of material comfort. By this standard western civilization is judged superior to any other, and the notable improvements in the treatment, cure, and prevention of disease, in transportation and communication, and in economic production are cited as incontrovertible evidence. It is further pointed out that this material progress is due on the one hand to economic efficiency and on the other to the development of modern science and its application to practical problems. Hence the conclusion is reached that economic efficiency and scientific knowledge are the basic criteria of progress, and that the history of progress should be written first in terms of the control of nature by science, and secondly in terms of man's economic development, from its beginnings in the invention of tools, the division of labor, the discovery of a medium of exchange, to our modern money economy, technology and mass production.[1]

However, to rest the case for progress on economic and scientific advance alone seems a precarious undertaking. It is all too easy for critics to point out that the same technical skills which serve to enrich life may also be used to destroy it; that widespread misery, poverty, and unemployment exist in spite of the new standard of comfort; that social stability is endangered by the fact that improved techniques in the production of goods have not been matched by adequate methods of consumption and distribution.[2] Thus it appears that economic and scientific achievement cannot be considered adequate criteria even of material progress unless supplemented by an emphasis on a type of social organization that will permit the increasing enjoyment of their

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[1]Cf. A. J. Todd, Theories of Social Progress (New York: Macmillan, 1918), p. 213. The following is a typical statement of this latter point of view: "Progress means in the last analysis an enlargement of the sources of subsistence, and history in its highest significance is the story of this material conquest."

[2]Ibid., pp. 184-99.

fruits.

Further, there are those who insist that progress lies not alone in material welfare but in the aesthetic, intellectual, moral and religious quality of a civilization. Thus it has become the fashion to condemn western society on the ground of its ugliness,[1] and for its failure to stimulate the capacity to create and enjoy the beautiful. Perhaps, as Kingsley Martin observes, we have not been much concerned with this criterion since

> the philosophy of progress is essentially a moral philosophy, continuously concerned with the effects of action. The creation and enjoyment of beauty fits only with difficulty into its scheme and program. The artist has naturally objected to this emphasis on the future: time and moral preoccupations are alike his enemies. In his view the men of the nineteenth century spent their time and energy pouring out the wine of the present as a libation to the future.[2]

This may also be the reason why increase in knowledge when used as an argument for progress almost invariably refers to scientific knowledge and that not because of its intrinsic interest but because of its effect on the world of affairs.

The test of the intellectual quality of a civilization is variously conceived. It may refer to the amount and quality of literary production and scientific research, to the spread of knowledge and the character of general education, to the mental calibre of the citizens as evidenced both in men of genius and in the average level of intelligence, to the capacity of people to achieve individually and collectively a "rational purposive development" of their common life.[3] There are many writers, though their numbers have diminished since the war, who assert that on all these counts western industrial civilization is superior to any other type, past or present. They point to the rise in the level of literacy, the systems of public education, the growth and spread of knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, and the extension and success of democratic forms of government. The following comment is typical of some of the extreme statements made: "The difference in mental caliber between a town bred arti-

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[1]Cf. Nicholas Berdyaev, The Bourgeois Mind (New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1933), p. 13.

[2]Kingsley Martin, French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century, p. 278.

[3]Todd, op. cit., p. 148.

san and an agricultural laborer in either England or America may be taken not unfairly as the gauge of progress in intellect and culture which has paralleled in time and area the industrial civilization."[1] One scarcely needs to comment that, aside from our scientific achievements, it is difficult to substantiate all of these claims to superiority. Democratic institutions have not fared so well of late; dangers in general education of an elementary sort are apparent in the popularity of tabloids and cheap amusements, and in the susceptibility of the half educated to subversive propaganda; there are disturbing indications of a low level of intelligence on the part of the majority as revealed, for example, in the results of the Army Alpha tests during the war and subsequently in the schools; finally it is easy in a period of mob hysteria to be cynical about the capacity of groups for intelligent planning of their activities. Thus, in spite of careful definitions of intelligence as inclusive of both rational and emotional factors, this criterion of progress is criticized as essentially a perpetuation of the vain hope of the eighteenth century that social progress would result from a general enlightenment. It is insisted, on the contrary, that certain difficulties exist which did not seem real to the eighteenth century, namely that ". . . . men would know and still act as if they were ignorant, that they might be creatures of heredity even more than of environment and follow instinct even to disaster, that their values might be wrong when their knowledge was accurate."[2]

Therefore there seems to be no escaping the moral test of progress. The question as to whether men have improved in their capacity for co-operative action for ethically defensible ends is frequently asked.[3] For example, are they learning to settle disputes by persuasion instead of force? Is justice broadly defined and fairly administered? Are we more humane in the treatment of the criminal and the hopelessly dependent? Are the rights of the individual better safeguarded, and is society organized in such a

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[1] Ibid., p. 212. [2] Martin, op. cit., p. 292.

[3] Cf. F. S. Marvin, Progress and History (Oxford: University Press, 1921), p. 29: "The touchstone of human progress is to be found in the capacity for that ennobling form of experience whereby we become conscious co-workers and co-helpers in an age-long, world-wide striving after the good."

way as to further his finest development?[1] These are important questions.

Here again it used to be our proud boast that in these respects our society was not only the best that had ever been achieved, but that it was improving by leaps and bounds. Those who held this position pointed to the spread of democratic institutions, to the extension of suffrage, to the growth of parliamentary socialism and the rise of co-operatives, to the Hague Court, to higher standards of living among the working classes, to free pulpit and press, to new programs and institutions for the care of the old and the sick, the feeble-minded and insane, the criminal and the delinquent,--in fine to the spread and achievement of the ideals of western liberalism. But it is not necessary to labor the point that the events of the last two decades have made plain the exceedingly precarious foundation on which these achievements rested and the great gaps in their actual realization. Not only have many of them been abandoned entirely, due to various pressures, but their validity as ideals is even seriously questioned. Hence it appears on the one hand that the argument for progress cannot be based on examples of the spread of liberal social ideals, and on the other that more careful consideration must be given to the ethical criteria by which a social order might be judged "progressive."

Finally we turn to the religious quality of a civilization as a criterion of progress. Of all the tests, with the possible exception of the aesthetic, this is the most difficult to define, but, when used, it apparently refers to something akin to morale,--to that spirit which unifies a people in common effort for common ideals. Thus Dawson:

> We are only just beginning to understand how intimately and profoundly the vitality of a society is bound up with its religion. It is the religious impulse which supplies the cohesive force which unifies a society and a culture. The great civilizations of the world do not produce the great religions as a kind of cultural by-product; in a very real sense the great religions are the foundations on which the great civi-

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[1] Cf. Albert Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics (London: A. & C. Black, 1923), p. 278: "Civilization . . . . consists in actualization of all intrinsically possible forms of progress, of knowledge, of power and of human association and organization, and in the co-operation of these to produce the inner perfection of the individual as being the true and final aim of civilization."

> lizations rest. A society which has lost it religion becomes sooner or later a society which has lost its culture.[1]

Studies of primitive societies seem to verify this emphasis on the creative and unifying function of religion for it appears as the source of the arts, of science, of law, indeed of all the major social activities and institutions. Thus Durkheim refers to religion as "the concentrated expression of the whole collective life," and states that it has "given birth to all that is essential in society."[2]

How does modern western civilization fare when measured by this test? There is much to support the thesis that far from progressing it is in danger of destroying itself for lack of a common faith. In the eighteenth century cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism, both inheritances from the Christian tradition, served as great unifying loyalties,[3] but the twentieth century, though more at one than ever before in the external aspects of culture, suffers from grievous lack of anything that might be called spiritual unity. Nationalism, which Randall refers to as "the true religion of the present age,"[4] has replaced cosmopolitanism, and class consciousness and a cynical individualism bid fair to supplant humanitarianism. Individuals differ on the methods of achieving a new unity,--pragmatists of the Dewey School, for example, urging a type of education that will increase the individual's awareness of the existence and significance of economic and cultural unities which transcend race, class, and nation;[5] medievalists like Dawson and Berdyaev urging a return to the religious center from which the modern age took its departure,[6]--

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[1] Dawson, Progress and Religion, p. 232.

[2] Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, pp. 418, 419. Quoted by Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, pp. 55, 56.

[3] Randall, The Making of the Modern Mind, p. 376.

[4] Ibid., p. 430.

[5] Cf. John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 87: "The ideal ends to which we attach our faith are not shadowy andwavering. They assume concrete form in our understanding of our relations to one another and the values contained in these relations. . . . . Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant."

[6] Nicholas Berdyaev, The End of Our Time (London: Sheed &

but all are agreed as to its desirability.

But though on any of the counts mentioned--material, aesthetic, intellectual, moral, or religious--present day western society shows grave imperfections and future progress seems problematical, there are those who urge that such a judgment is based on too limited a perspective and that in the "long view" progress is seen to be a reality.[1] Thus the attempt is made to find evidence for progress by expanding the context within which it is measured. The time span is extended to include the whole of human history and biological development; the area of analysis takes in all mankind; the criterion is equated with survival value. In this setting progress appears either as a law of development or as a principle of creativity. We are now on the way to a theory of universal progress in which time merges with eternity; the cosmos is the scene of action; absolute values are the criteria, and progress takes the form of cosmic purpose.

Let us see what is involved in this identification of progress, first with biological development, and second with human history. The argument runs as follows: To begin with, it is maintained that progress is indicated in the biological realm because of the appearance of man in the course of biological evolution. This conclusion rests on two major assumptions, namely,

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Ward, Inc., 1933), pp. 28, 29: "The sacred tradition of European culture is attached at a thousand points to the sacred tradition of the Christian Church, and a break with this last can result only in a decline of culture, a debasement of its quality. The exhaustion of the Renaissance in contemporary history, the enfeeblement of its effective energies, are the result of its estrangement both from Christianity and from antiquity, and all those partial revivals that our history has known have been a return to both." Cf. Dawson, op. cit., pp. 217, 248: "This development was inevitable, since . . . . . the Liberal faith owed its strength to the elements that it had derived from the religious tradition that it attempted to replace. Thus, in so far as it succeeded in secularizing European culture, it undermined the foundations on which its own existence depended. Instead of uniting Europe in a new spiritual unity, it had helped to destroy the spiritual tradition to which European culture owed its unity and its very existence." "The return to the Christian tradition would provide Europe with the necessary spiritual foundation for the social unification that it so urgently needs." Cf. Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, II, 1004, 1005; Tillich, The Religious Situation, especially Introduction.

[1] Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History.

that the sequential arrangement of organic forms as set forth in the evolutionary theory is not merely a logical construct but a description of an actual development in time, and, secondly, that man is a being of greater worth than any of the preceding forms in this development. Thus at the outset the doctrine becomes involved in the metaphysical problems of time, of permanence and change, and of value.

The argument goes on, in the next place, to posit the progressive character of the process as a whole, and hence the inevitability of progress. The notion of progress as an aspect of development thus gives way to a belief in progress as implicit in all development. As stated above, this conclusion takes the form on the one hand of an emphasis on progress as a law of evolution, on the other as identical with the vital urge to activity inherent in the organism,--according as rational necessity or contingency is regarded as the significant feature of the life process. We are therefore led to a consideration of the theories of biological determinism and vitalism.

Briefly, the theory of biological determinism is a thoroughly rationalistic attempt to describe biological phenomena in terms of universal, uniform laws analogous to those formulated with reference to the physical world. It rests on the underlying assumption that biological processes like physical are intelligible, and that ultimately it will be possible to describe them with the same degree of accuracy and predictability as has been achieved in the world of physical and chemical relationships. This means that continuity, repetition and reversibility must be fundamental characteristics of biological processes, for precise and verified observation is impossible without repetition of the event under consideration. This assumption seemed vindicated both by the successes of scientists in reducing life processes to physical and chemical terms, and by the theory of natural selection by which Darwin thought to explain the transition from one form of organic life to the next. Thus was implied the necessary and essentially mechanical character of biological development. The following statement is typical of this line of reasoning:

> We are now fairly agreed in a monistic conception of nature that regards the whole universe, including man, as a wonderful unity, governed by unalterable and eternal laws. . . . . I have endeavored to show that this pure monism is firmly established and that the admission of the all powerful

> rule of the same principle of evolution throughout the universe compels us to formulate a single supreme law, the all-embracing "Law of Substance," or the united laws of the constancy of matter and the conservation of energy. We should never have reached this supreme general conception if Charles Darwin--"a monistic philosopher" in the true sense of the word--had not prepared the way by his theory of descent by natural selection, and crowned the great work of his life by the association of this theory with a naturalistic anthropology.[1]

The implications of this position for the doctrine of progress are evident, for if it is assumed, first, that progress has resulted from biological development, and, secondly, that biological development is a necessary development, then it is possible to conclude that progress is an inevitable concomitant of biological development. Further, attempts to define the law of progress are wholly logical, whatever one may think of Spencer's version of this law as development from simple to complex.

But the progressive nature of biological evolution is asserted also by those who question the validity, not only of biological determinism, but of mechanistic theories of the nature of the physical world. The vitalists had early maintained that living things were to be distinguished sharply from non-living by the possession of a "vital principle or energy distinct in kind from other cosmic energies."[2] Accordingly they attributed biological development primarily to the struggle of the organism to adapt to the environment rather than to any mechanical conformity to external forces.[3] Eventually this theory became the basis of the doctrine of emergent evolution which emphasizes the unique spontaneous character of each new form as it appears and hence the unpredictable character of the process itself. In retrospect it is possible to discern certain uniformities in the process but these cannot be made the basis of a law of development or of progress since it cannot be assumed with certainty that past uniformi-

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[1]E. Haeckel, "Darwin as Anthropologist" in Darwin and Modern Science, p. 151. Quoted by W. C. Dampier-Whetham, A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 342.

[2]"Abiogenesis" in Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

[3]Dampier-Whetham, op. cit., pp. 370-72.

ties will hold good for the future.

The protests of the vitalists were almost eclipsed for a time because of the popularity of the mechanistic viewpoint, but the continued failure of physiological chemists to re-create life from the elements to which they had reduced it, and, more important, the positive evidence of the new physics as to the existence of an area of indeterminateness even in the structure of the physical world, has strengthened their position.[1] Indeed there are certain pan-psychists who now extend the vitalist principle of the dynamic and essentially unpredictable character of living things to inanimate objects and speak of "sentience and appetency as characterizing each individual particle of the so-called inorganic world."[2] On this evidence of an innate spontaneity in physical and biological processes rests the assumption of the essentially creative character of the world and particularly of life. In turn, it is argued that the creative character of the evolutionary process is indicative of its essential progressiveness,--provided, of course, that the cardinal assumption is made that the results of this creative activity are and will continue to be of increasing value.

But the full significance of this attempt to take the "long view" with respect to progress becomes apparent only when man's social history, like his biological, is regarded as an evolutionary process resulting from the interaction of the individual and the environment. To be sure, the process is infinitely more complex than in the biological realm for we are dealing not only with the effect of a geographical environment upon an individual organism, but with the influence of a social environment as well, and frequently the group and not the individual is the unit whose behavior is studied.[3] But nonetheless it is held possible to discern the general trend of development in history and to trace, in some instances at least, the various stages in the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 280.

[3] Cf. L. T. Hobhouse, Social Evolution and Political Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), pp. 29-39. Adapted by R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), pp. 969-75.

process and their interconnections.[1]

The case for progress in history can then be argued in the same fashion as the case for biological progress. First it is asserted that social evolution has resulted in progress, for just as biological development issued in an end of value, i.e., man, so modern civilization with all its faults is judged superior to primitive. The following quotation is illustrative of this type of argument:

> From whatever standpoint we regard primitive life, then, whether from the economic, juridical, moral or domestic; whether we consider the quality or content of primitive mind, its limited range, its superstitions, its lack of prudence and foresight; or whether we have regard to the bareness and lack of arts and comforts which mark savage life, we can come to but one conclusion, namely, that life at this level is bald, crude and raw. Common sense and our own experience unite to testify that we have outstripped the meager and painful life of our forbears.[2]

Not that modern civilization is to be considered the end result of social progress as man is regarded the end result of biological evolution,[3] but that its character is sufficiently advanced

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[1]Cf. J. H. Robinson, The New History (New York: Macmillan, 1912), p. 62. The genetic interpretation of history is described as an attempt to determine not only "how things really were--wie es eigentlich gewesen," but "how things had come about--wie es eigentlich geworden."

[2]Todd, op. cit., p. 91. Cf. J. H. Tufts, "The Moral Life and the Construction of Values and Standards," in John Dewey et al., Creative Intelligence (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917), p. 366.

[3]It is important to make clear the distinction between theories of racial and social progress. Much of W. R. Inge's criticism of the doctrine of progress, for example, is based on the assumption that the only real progress is racial progress. He says, "We have been driven to the conclusion that neither science nor history gives us any warrant for believing that humanity has advanced, except by accumulating knowledge and experience, and the instruments of living. . . . . I only point out that they do not constitute real progress in human nature itself, and that in the absence of any real progress these gains are external, precarious and liable to be turned to our own destruction" (Outspoken Essays [London and New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1922], pp. 173-76). On the other hand, Hobhouse, in contrast to the eugenists, develops the position that "progress is not racial but social" (Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 969-73). Cf. A. J. Balfour, "Progress" in Arthur James Balfour as Philosopher and Thinker (London and New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1912), pp. 414 ff.; R. Shafer, Progress and Science (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), pp. 53-56.

over primitive life to indicate that society is moving in the direction of a goal, namely, the unification of human activity on a world-wide scale.[1] Various factors are suggested as leading to that unification, notably economic processes which make the whole world one by virtue of our economic interdependence,[2] the growth of modern science which gives us a common language, a common world view, a common technological civilization,[3] and, finally, the humanitarian ideals of religion which give expression to men's sense of community with their fellows and inspire them to break down the intervening barriers.[4]

Secondly, the theory of the essentially progressive character of the whole process is advanced, apparently on the same grounds as in the case of biological evolution, i.e., the assumption that historical development either follows necessary rules, or is creative in character.[5] Thus we have individuals influenced by deterministic theories of evolution urging the discovery of the laws of history,[6] while, on the other hand, those influenced by

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[1]Cf. Mary Follett, The New State (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1934); E. G. Conklin, The Direction of Human Evolution (New York: Scribners, 1921); Anderson Woods, Time's Arrow in Society. A Philosophy of Progress (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), especially pp. 228 ff.; Hobhouse, Social Evolution and Political Theory, Introduction and pp. 161-65 (He is particularly interested in the evolution of a "higher and more comprehensive social mind" which will make possible "rational self-direction" of society). F. S. Marvin, The Living Past (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), especially Introduction and concluding chapter; A. Ferrière, La Loi du Progrès (Paris: M. Giard & I. E. Brière, 1915), pp. 467-659; George Mead, Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 310.

[2]Mead, op. cit., pp. 291 ff. [3]Shafer, op. cit., pp.16-20.

[4]Mead, op. cit., pp. 296 f. [5]Teggart, op.cit., pp.221-23.

[6]E. P. Cheyney, Law in History and Other Essays (New York: Knopf, 1927), chap. iv, especially pp. 7, 26, 28: "History . . . . has not been the result of voluntary effort on the part of individuals or groups of individuals, much less of chance; but has been subject to law. . . . . If his action has been conformable to law it has been effective; when he has worked along with the great forces of history he has influenced constructively the course of events; when his action has violated historic law the results have been destructive, momentary, subject to reversal. . . . . For practical uses, if history is to have a practical use, what we need is a clue to the future. This a knowledge of the laws of history might give us." Cf. Ferrière, op. cit., pp. 638-44. He has worked out a series of four charts illustrating the working of the law of progress in terms of differentiation and

the vitalistic emphasis, urge abandonment to the forces of change, confident that every new development is the work of the mysterious creative power inherent in the historic process and hence "for the best." The following quotation shows the extent to which even a careful historian could be swayed by this latter philosophy of progress:

> It is clear enough today that the conscious reformer who appeals to the future is the final product of a progressive order of things. While the conservative sullenly opposed what were in Roger Bacon's time called the "suspicious novelties," and condemned changes either as wicked or impracticable, he was himself being gradually drawn along in a process of insensible betterment in which he refused consciously to participate. Even those of us who have little taste for mysticism have to recognize a mysterious unconscious impulse which appears to be a concomitant of natural order. It would seem as if this impulse has always been unsettling the existing conditions and pushing forward, groping after something more elaborate and intricate than what already existed. This vital impulse, elan vital, as Bergson calls it, represents the inherent radicalism of nature herself. This power that makes for experimental readjustment,--for adventure in the broadest sense of the term,--is no longer a conception confined to poets and dreamers, but must be reckoned with by the most exacting historian and the hardest-headed man of science. We are only just coming to realize that we can co-operate with and direct this innate force of change which has so long been silently operating, in spite of the respectable lethargy, indifference, and even protests of man himself, the most educable of all its creatures.
>
> At last, perhaps, the long-disputed sin against the Holy Ghost has been found; it may be the refusal to co-operate with the vital principle of betterment. History would seem, in short, to condemn the principle of conservatism as a hopeless and wicked anachronism.[1]

The bulk of the criticism of this version of the doctrine of progress is directed not against the initial premise that progress has been made in the course of biological and social evolution, nor against the assumptions of the worth of man[2] and the

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integration as it applies to social progress in general, to political, juridical and economic progress. He concludes: "Rêves d'utopistes? - Réalité de demain! Ce demain surgira dans vingt ans, dans mille ans: n'importe. Le progrès est nécessaire. Il est organique" (p. 661).

[1]Robinson, op. cit., pp. 264, 265.

[2]However the Barthian emphasis on the sinfulness of man before God and his consequent inability to achieve real progress, i.e., moral progress, should be mentioned. Cf. Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (New York: Macmillan, 1937), chap. xxvi. "Measured by the Divine self-end all our action is nothing, even

reality of time and change on which this premise is based, important as these assumptions are, but against the conclusion that progress is universal and inevitable because implicit in the evolutionary process itself. The criticism takes various forms according as the mechanistic or the vitalistic version is under scrutiny, but three main types may be noted: namely, that generalizations concerning the nature of the evolutionary process as a whole cannot be made unless certain aspects are emphasized to the exclusion of others; secondly, that belief in its progressive character is derived not from a study of the process itself, but from certain a priori assumptions with respect to its origin, nature, and destiny which should be acknowledged; thirdly, that the doctrine is ethically demoralizing because lacking in the clear-cut criteria of progress essential to ethical action, and because frequently productive of a laissez faire attitude with respect to evil.

Let us consider the first objection in more detail. As observed by the vitalists, the mechanistic theory of progress breaks down because the idea of spontaneity as "an ultimate and universal category of all things" runs counter to attempts to interpret the evolutionary process in terms of uniform laws.[1] This is particularly evident to historians who have discovered that "the uniqueness and unrepeatability of historical events are quite as significant as the general sociological laws which may be represented in them."[2] Thus laws of the evolutionary process are in no sense absolute or determinative, but are simply abstractions with respect to those phases of the process which lend themselves to generalization.[3] It is plain, therefore, that

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that which is most successful. The need of the world, the actual obstacles which must be overcome cannot be overcome by our action, and the actual help required cannot be given by us" (p. 283).

[1]Lyman, op. cit., p. 279.

[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, op. cit., Introduction, p. xvi.

[3]"History and Historiography," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. "There is a tendency to apply the word law to the relationships of succession and of coexistence which present the greatest degree of extension and of constancy and especially to those which can be expressed by a mathematical formula. But the absolute character of law is in the mind rather than in reality. . . . . Law is a general fact. It is not necessarily universal

since we cannot speak of the evolutionary process in terms of uniform causal sequences, we cannot speak of a universal law of progress.[1]

Similarly the vitalists' theory of universal progress breaks down because of an over emphasis on the category of spontaneity. There is certainly an element of contingency in the evolutionary process, but to regard it as evidence of the "inherent radicalism of nature herself" is to give it a universal significance which is highly debatable. The point is that neither interpretation of the evolutionary process will hold in entirety because both are partially true. Thus Lyman:

> Spontaneity . . . . is rooted even in the seemingly inanimate world; wherefore we are compelled to regard its vast uniformities as statistical averages rather than as absolutely changeless laws. Variation and selective action are increasingly manifest throughout the ascending scale of emergent evolution, although the ascent is no less dependent upon the building up of stable organizations than upon the presence of increasing spontaneity. In human history the vast uniformities of physical nature are omnipresent, as are also the enormous continuities of the biological world; moreover, in addition to biological heredity, human habit, custom, and tradition form tenaciously stable complexes, and "social heredity" becomes a most potent force. Nevertheless, the capacities for intelligence, purpose and the appreciation of value which have emerged play a growingly significant part.
> . . . .
> A view of history which seeks to hold in some kind of perspective these various complexes of forces will need to retain a large measure of pluralism while seeking to discern principles and laws. . . . . Thus determination and contingency, and the interplay of physical, economic and idealistic

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and eternal; it manifests itself in history; it can be created in history, a "function of the times." Generalities, similarities, uniformities, are equivalents of the word law, although looser than the latter in its rigid connotation. Law is not an absolute; the general is a degree of law."

[1]This is well illustrated in the criticisms leveled against the Spencerian belief in progress as being always from simple to complex. This "law" will not hold foe either biological or historical development, even on the basis of survival as the criterion of progress. There are numerous examples in the biological realm of simple forms which have shown great capacity to survive and conversely of highly specialized forms which have vanished (Inge, op. cit., p. 165). And in the social realm complexity of organization is by no means an indication of progress. It is a moot question, for example, whether a highly organized industrial civilization has equal survival value with a more rudimentary rural culture like the Chinese (Dawson, op. cit., pp. 66-68).

forces demand . . . . recognition in our view of history.[1]

Thus if no generalizations can be made concerning the nature of the evolutionary process as a whole, any theory of progress based upon such generalizations must be abandoned.

However, although belief in evolutionary progress was expressed in terms of the monistic philosophies of evolution and is consequently affected by their modification, it has been justly observed that in the last analysis these philosophies appear to support the doctrine of progress only because approached from the standpoint of a convinced optimism. The deterministic system seems to offer a guarantee of progress because regarded a priori as good in itself or as the work of a beneficent Creator who sustains it, while the vitalistic interpretation of progress is dependent upon belief in an innate purpose guiding the process in the direction of a desirable end. That is, spontaneity must mean creativity, and creativity must be indicative of purpose before the vitalistic theory of the world appears relevant to the doctrine of progress. Thus for mechanism the problem of origin is central, for vitalism that of destiny, and Dawson is quite right in his observation that the mechanistic theory of progress was only possible in the context of Deism, while the vitalistic derived its authority from the prevalent version of the Christian teleological conception of life.[2] And the importance of these prior assumptions becomes even more marked when we consider that in a different metaphysical context both mechanism and vitalism lend themselves to a cyclical theory of history, or to a theory of historical degeneration. In the case of the former, mechanism supports the notion of an endless repetition of meaningless events, vitalism of ceaseless flux; with respect to the latter, which incidentally has appropriated to itself the second law of thermo dynamics, mechanism suggests the figure of the clock running down, vitalism of a dying organism.[3] Thus theories of evolutionary progress are criticized because of the failure of their advocates to recognize and criticize the metaphysical assumptions on which they rest.

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[1]Lyman, op. cit., pp. 326, 327; cf. "History and Historiography," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

[2]Dawson, op. cit., pp. 190 f., 220 f. [3]Ibid., pp. 220 f.

Finally, the doctrine of evolutionary progress is criticized as ethically demoralizing. In the first place, neither the mechanistic nor the vitalistic version provide us with an adequate criterion of progress. As Dean Inge points out with respect to the former: "The one criterion for real Darwinism is the abstract success or prevalence of whatever happens to prevail, without any regard for its character. This leaves us with no criterion at all."[1] And the same objection holds for vitalism. Change in itself is not necessarily a good,[2] but many exponents of the vitalistic theory come perilously near equating it with progress.[3] In contrast it is noted that change may be destructive as well as creative; that too great or too sudden changes in the circumstances of life may destroy an organism or a society;[4] that one is faced with the necessity of some standard of value other than mere becoming if the doctrine of progress is to have any ethical significance. Dewey's comment on Bergson is illustrative of the general line of criticism:

> Flux is made something to revere, something profoundly akin to what is best within ourselves, will and creative energy. It is not, as it is in experience, a call to effort, a challenge to investigation, a potential doom of disaster and death.[5]

Progress is a moral concept; it implies a judgment of better or worse, and the majority of scientists are at pains to point out that their researches do not give us this sort of information. They can tell us something of the variety of forms which life has

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[1]W. R. Inge, God and the Astronomers (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1933), pp. 132.

[2]L. P. Jacks in Marvin, op. cit., p. 139.

[3]Cf. the quotation from Robinson on p. 73.

[4]C. Dawson, The Modern Dilemma (New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1933), p. 35.

[5]John Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925), p. 51. Cf. Inge in Outspoken Essays, pp. 179, 180. He notes the similarity of this emphasis on blind activity with Puritan asceticism quoting the following lines from a poem by Clough in illustration:

"Go! say not in thine heart, And what then were it accomplished,
Were the wild impulse allayed, what were the use and the good?"

"This question," says the Dean, "has begun to press for an answer."

assumed in both its physical and social aspects, and suggest their order and relation to each other, but they are silent with respect to their value. Likewise the identification of progress with the process described by science gives us no basis for a value judgment.

Secondly, the doctrine of evolutionary progress is regarded as ethically demoralizing because it tends to foster a specious optimism with respect to evil. There is "much evolution that is not progress,"[1] and the temptation is either to ignore these disagreeable aspects as relatively insignificant since "everything will come out all right in the end anyway," or to accept them without reservations as the price of progress. The following quotation is an excellent illustration of the sentimentalism which the latter attitude may promote:

> Now knowledge, freedom and prosperity are covering the earth; for three centuries past human virtue has been steadily increasing, and mankind is prepared to receive a higher faith. But in order to build we must first destroy. . . . . In each generation the human race has been tortured that their children might profit by their woes. Our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past. Is it therefore unjust that we also should suffer for the benefit of those who are to come? Famine, pestilence and war are no longer essential for the advancement of the human race. But a season of mental anguish is at hand and through this we must pass in order that our posterity may rise.[2]

It is easy to resent this cavalier acceptance of the necessity of suffering. Of course it is unjust that we must suffer "for the benefit of those who are to come,"--and it may be in part unnecessary--just as it is unjust that "our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past,"--especially if none of us are given any choice in the matter. Such progress, if progress it be, is blind unethical progress,[3] and it is our task to promote progress by intelligent activity which seeks to banish evil rather than to wait for good to come from evil by a process of unconscious growth. Thus Dewey:

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[1]Lyman, op. cit., p. 335.

[2]Winwood Read, The Martyrdom of Man (20th ed.; London, 1912), pp. 524-44. Quoted in Wallis, Culture and Progress, p. 352.

[3]Dawson, op. cit., p. 19.

> I doubt if the whole history of mankind shows any more vicious and demoralizing ethic than the recent widespread belief that each of us as individuals and as classes, might safely and complacently devote ourselves to increasing our own possessions, material, intellectual, and artistic, because progress was inevitable anyhow. In dwelling upon the need of conceiving progress as a responsibility and not as an endowment, I put primary emphasis upon responsibility for intelligence, for the power which foresees, plans and constructs in advance.[1]

What, then, are we to conclude with respect to the problem of progress? Where has the above analysis of the doctrine in its various settings led us? There are at least four possibilities open: to abandon the idea entirely and turn to a theory of historical degeneration or of cyclical change as more in accord with the facts; to shift the emphasis from the fact to the possibility of progress and work for its achievement without further speculation as to the nature of the processes which may support it; to attempt a new interpretation of history which shall take account of its pluralistic character and yet serve to integrate men in their efforts to achieve progress; to relate the hope of progress to some "unconditioned" aspect of existence.

Suffice it to say of the first possibility that these alternate theories of history involve repudiation of one or more of the fundamental assumptions of the doctrine of progress, namely, the reality of time and change, the value of existence, and the worth of man. In the first instance the concept of time is replaced with that of time-cycles, analogous, in the thought of Spengler, to the life span of an individual. To understand the events of one time cycle is to understand the pattern of history, for existence is but a succession of time-cycles in which the same phases of development are repeated endlessly. Thus there is no ground for hope in the improvement of existence since the possibility of change is denied. Man is a fated creature caught in an endless round of living.[2] In the second instance time and change are real but nothing is to be hoped from the future since history indicates that the conditions of life will become increasingly difficult and complicated, and tensions will grow until the end will come in a final great debacle when man will destroy him-

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[1] John Dewey, quoted by Lyman, op. cit., p. 340.

[2] Dawson, op. cit., pp. 30-46.

self. The affinity of these theories with pessimistic philosophies is as marked as the dependence of the idea of progress on an optimistic interpretation of existence, and, as we should expect, their revival is coterminus with a revival of pessimism in the West as a serious philosophy. Of course there can be no progress in a world in which life is evil and change is illusory, or in which existence has lost its pristine vigor and beauty and is becoming progressively more undesirable.

According to advocates of the second position, the problem of progress is primarily an ethical one. These individuals are not so much interested in the doctrine as an interpretation of history as they are in it as a philosophy of action.[1] Accordingly they maintain that there is no place for an abstract or universal definition of progress, but that instead progress must be defined and redefined with respect to specific but ever new situations where the need of improvement is indicated, and that these definitions must serve as a basis of action directed toward their achievement. Belief in progress thus involves both the conscious choice of goals and the effort to realize them. And the vague hope that progress will result automatically from a general busyness must be abandoned. The following quotations will illuminate this summary:

> Thus the final good, absolute standards of value are sought in vain; there is merely a universe in which the ideas of things as well as the things themselves arise out of temporary conditions and are transformed with the modification of the conditions out of which they arose. On this assumption we must dispense with the notion of finality, must suppose that the idea of progress and all of its special formulations are but temporary insights useful for the brief moment in which they flourish.[2]

> Belief in progress persists, but as a process of definite achievement, the result of a conscious and deliberate solution of problems, limited in scope, that arise in a constantly changing social order.[3]

> Science, philosophy, history and common sense unite in testifying that progress is not a free gift of the gods but something to be earned by clear vision and hard work; that it is a human contingency based upon human effort, foresight and

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[1]Charles Beard, Introduction to Bury, op. cit., p. xl.

[2]"Progress," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

[3]Schapiro, op. cit., p. 270.

constructive utilization of human powers.[1]

But if the question is raised as to the metaphysical grounds on which belief in the possibility of progress may be sustained, the problem again takes a historical and philosophical turn. As we have noted, the pragmatists consider the attempt to answer this question a fruitless one. History, according to them, is not only pluralistic but relativistic, i.e., historical study reveals only numerous and at times conflicting movements whose interpretation changes with each historian and each new present. Thus Mead: ". . . . new pasts will 'arise behind us' in the course of evolution as each present 'marks out and in a sense selects what has made its own peculiarity possible.'"[2] In such a shifting scene the task of discerning any objectively valid trends indicative of progress seems hopeless. Hence the pragmatists content themselves with asserting merely that life is changing and that men have the ability to influence the direction of change. Thus for them the doctrine of progress rests solely on an autonomous ethic whose content varies with each situation.

There is an interesting variety of reactions to this position. The theistic naturalists and the new supernaturalists who build on their position feel that the abandonment of a metaphysical basis for the doctrine of progress is premature, and that it is possible to note within the relativities of history a degree of unity and purposiveness of use as a basis for an ethic of progress. Thus they are interested in developing a new evolutionary philosophy which will meet the criticisms directed against the old versions while preserving their valid observations.

Lyman, for example, starts by emphasizing that there has been progress in history.

> Just as an age-long process of biological development made possible human personality--a process which, if human personality has intrinsic worth, must be called progress--so there has been within the general stream of human evolution a development of morals which has meant a growth of individual personality and a growth of society in such a way that, in varying degrees, they have mutually furthered each other. So

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[1]Todd, op. cit., p. 105. Cf. also, Teggart, op. cit., pp. 222-23; L. T. Hobhouse, Liberalism (New York: Henry Holt & Co., n.d.), p. 137.

[2]George Mead, The Philosophy of the Present (Chicago, London: Open Court Publishing Co., 1932), Introduction, p. xviii.

> far as this is true, or in process of becoming true, we are bound to acknowledge the reality of progress in human history.[1]

The problem, however, is to link these various lines of progress--organic, racial, social--in a general scheme of development which shall make clear the relationship between the necessary and the contingent elements in experience. To this end is posited the doctrine of emergent evolution which, by the device of allocating the various progressive movements to different levels of development, allows for both cumulative structural unities and indeterminate action.[2] This is an ingenious solution, though there are those who for various reasons question its validity.[3]

Finally, we come to the attempts to find a basis for an ethic of progress in some "unconditioned" aspect of existence.[4] Those advocating this procedure either deny with the pragmatists the possibility of achieving an adequate world view by rational means, or point out that the full significance of such a world view does not become clear until it is related to a larger frame of reference. Thus the appeal is either to mysticism or to revelation. Schweitzer's thought is an example of the former. He has abandoned the search for a world view,[5] but he is not content

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[1]Lyman, op. cit., pp. 334, 335. [2]Ibid., p. 343.

[3]Inge, God and the Astronomers, p. 140. He observes that in the concept of emergence we have an attempt to find a reconciling principle between mechanism and teleology which is of no use since it asserts and denies the reality of change in the same breath. "Do the emergents emerge out of what they are not, or are we to take evolution in its earlier and proper sense of an unpacking of what was potentially there all the time? The advocates of emergent evolution wish to allow for the appearance of something really new, without surrendering to teleology or breaking too sharply with the mechanists. They have, I am afraid, only succeeded in finding an ambiguous word."

[4]Tillich, op. cit., p. 7: "To live spiritually is to live in the presence of meaning and without an ultimate meaning everything disappears into the abyss of meaninglessness. To speak of the unconditioned meaning is to speak of that which transcends the process of mere becoming, the mere transition from past to future; it is to speak of that which supports the times but is not subject to them. If any present has meaning it has eternity."

[5]Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics, Introduction, p. xii: "We can discover no trace in the world of any purposive development which might lend significance to our actions. No ethical element of any sort is observable in the world-process. Our progress in knowledge consists solely in the fact that we are

with the relativism of the pragmatic ethic and seeks by introspection to come upon some fundamental urge of the individual from which a cardinal principle of ethics may be derived. This he claims to have found in the unreflective will-to-live as a primary and universal desire of all living things. From this it can be implied that reverence for life is the basic moral demand.[1]

A much larger group of writers solve the problem, however, by an emphasis on some aspect of the Christian tradition.[2] Here the place given to mysticism, revelation, and rational thought varies with the individual, some making use of all, others repudiating one or another of these methods of knowledge. Thus we find Lyman advocating a type of Christian mysticism,[3] Dean Inge clinging to Christian Platonism,[4] the Neo-Thomists returning to the classic form of the Christian tradition,[5] and Tillich and others seeking a clue to Jewish-Christian eschatology in which they think the unconditioned appears as a judgment upon the par-

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able to describe the phenomena which make up the objective world, together with their issues, with ever greater detail and accuracy. It is impossible for us to comprehend the meaning of the whole."

[1] Ibid., pp. 252-55.

[2] Cf. Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress, pp. 35-39: "Were it not for the religious Personalism which we have engrained into us by prophetism and Christianity, individual autonomy, the belief in progress, the all-embracing community of mental outlook, the indestructibility and strength of our confidence in life and of our impulse to work, would be impossible."

[3] Lyman, op. cit., pp. 343-46.

[4] Inge, in Outspoken Essays, pp. 181 f: "What we need is a fixed and absolute standard of values, that we may know what we want to get and whither we want to go. It is no answer to say that all values are relative and ought to change. Some values are not relative but absolute. Spiritual progress must be within the sphere of a reality which is not itself progressing. . . . ."

[5] Dawson, Progress and Religion, p. 243: "Either Europe must abandon the Christian tradition and with it the faith in progress and humanity, or it must return consciously to the religious foundation on which these ideas were based."

tial aspects of life.[1]

In conclusion, the findings of this chapter may be summarized as follows: (1) Confidence can no longer be placed in the doctrine of progress in the form held by the social gospel theologians studied. (2) The variety and conflicting character of the alternative interpretations of history bidding for recognition make it exceedingly difficult to arrive at a satisfactory substitute. Consequently in the concluding chapter we shall attempt an analysis of the issues involved in this task and point out those aspects of present-day thought on the nature of history which in our judgment give most promise of leading to a fruitful solution.

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[1] Tillich, op. cit., especially Introduction and chap. 1. Cf. The Interpretation of History (New York and London: Scribners, 1936), pp. 266-82.

CHAPTER IV

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY TO THE REFORMULATION OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

It now remains to suggest the implications of our analysis of the social gospel and its world view for contemporary theology. What are the issues raised by the dependence of the earlier generation of social gospel writers on the idea of progress in the light of the problematic status of this idea? In the first place, we observe that the problem lies deeper than the mere revision of the idea of progress or than the selection of a substitute philosophy of history from among the rival interpretations at hand, difficult as this task would be. More fundamental is the question of the use to be made of history in the formulation of a social philosophy adequate to our present needs. Hence, since the social gospel is an aspect of modernist thought, we shall begin by asking: What is the role of historical study in modernist methodology? What particular functions does it fulfill for the social gospel? To what extent are these valid functions?

History serves a dual function in modernism. On the one hand, it is necessary for the re-creation of the settings in which the various Christian doctrines appear. Without it would be lacking both understanding of the historic Christian doctrines in relation to the life of their times, and the capacity to discriminate between the essential Christian continuum and the various thought forms in which it has found expression. On the other hand, it is essential to the presentation of the vital elements in the Christian interpretation of history in terms acceptable to the modern viewpoint, a task which involves an appreciation of modern views of the nature of history. The social gospel in its earlier formulation is illustrative of this dual function, first in the central place given to an understanding of the significance of Jesus and his "way of life" which is held to be norma-

tive, and, secondly, in the use made of the idea of progress.[1] Thus it is evident that the problems of historical methodology are of vital concern to those social gospel writers who must answer the questions raised by the existence of rival interpretations of the life of Jesus and of the meaning and direction of human history. For not only is the content of their message in large part derived from historical judgments, but its claim to authority rests on the validity of the methods used by the historian whose conclusions are employed. Their predicament is the more serious in that revelation, ecclesiastical pronouncements, mystical experience, and logical argument are rejected as ultimate tests of truth. For the modernist the authority of the historian supersedes that of Bible, Church, Saint or Philosopher.

Let us then first consider the problem of the authoritative character of historical judgments and its implications for the social gospel. The authority of the historian depends upon his ability to achieve objectivity in the description and interpretation of events. There must be some way to test the correctness of his conclusions or history ends in a hopeless subjectivism lacking any of the marks of authority. In other words, the authority of the historian rests on his word as a man of science. For this reason various attempts have been made to make history scientific, i.e., to develop a standardized technique of investigation and interpretation which will be productive of historical judgments approaching those of the natural sciences in definiteness, objectivity and predictability.[2]

Obviously there are many obstacles to such an undertaking. To begin with, it is impossible to describe historical events with the exactness possible in the natural sciences. The complexity of the subject matter, the presence of emotional factors which cannot be measured, the unique character of historical events all serve as barriers to precise and verified observation in this field. There can be no such thing as a controlled experi-

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[1]For example, compare the subject matter of the following two books by Shailer Mathews: Jesus on Social Institutions (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931); The Spiritual Interpretation of History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916).

[2]Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies, p. 32. Cf. E.A. Burtt, Religion in an Age of Science (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1929), p. 7.

ment in the study of history, in the strict sense of the term. These are difficulties which the historian shares with the sociologist.[1] In addition, his task is complicated by certain special problems, notably the fact that he is dependent on the testimony of others for the bulk of his material,[2] and that the character of any historical event is inevitably conditioned by the time perspective from which it is viewed. Thus the historian can never see it as it "really is," since such an achievement would only be possible from some timeless perspective.[3]

For these various reasons it appears that the historian cannot hope to achieve the degree of accuracy in the description of events that is possible in the natural sciences. This is not to minimize the great strides that have been made in this direction, particularly in the study of documents, the evaluation of sources, the dating of events, and the like. It is, however, to recognize that the historian can never more than approximate exact description of the event under consideration.

If this is the situation with respect to the description of individual historical events, the difficulties are heightened when one considers the problem of their interrelationship,--a problem of particular importance to the social gospel theologian whose interest is not primarily in isolated historical "facts" but in their causal connections.[4] How is the historian to achieve a theoretic basis for his field of investigation which is both

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[1]Cf. Morris R. Cohen in W. F. Ogburn and A. Goldenweiser, The Social Sciences (Boston, New York, etc.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), chap. xxxiii. In fact, they are common to all the sciences wherever the reversibility of the event observed is called into question,--by the relativity theory, for example.

[2]Cf. F.J.E. Woodbridge, The Purpose of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), p. 9: "A faithful and true record . . . . is a very difficult thing to obtain. . . . . The questions we ask of the dead, only we ourselves can answer."

[3]Ibid., pp. 14-17, 22. We touch here on one of the fundamental problems of epistemology basic to all the sciences. However, it is of particular importance for the historian whose major concern is with the transient aspects of existence.

[4]Note, for example, the prominent place which the genetic interpretation of history with its emphasis on historical continuity, social determinism, and cause and effect relationships holds in the social writing.

adequate to the various factors operative in human history and scientifically valid? According to the natural sciences, the ideal basis is to be found in a set of inductive generalizations capable of expression in mathematical terms.[1] Thus the historian who accepts their methodology as normative will center his interest in the "uniform and invariant relations between successive events," and will seek to reduce the number of variables to a minimum.[2] But this procedure implies that the chief concern of the historian is with the quantitative and the permanent aspects of experience and that the fortuitous, the unique and the qualitative factors are either beyond his ken or ultimately to be understood in the former terms. It is possible so to define the purpose of the historian.[3] But if questions are raised as to the necessity and uniformity of the historical process, and it is asserted that the emergent, the unique and the contingent must be recognized as irreducible elements of historical experience, the problem of historical causality must be stated differently. The historian is then concerned to analyze not the laws governing the unfolding of an inevitable sequence of events, but the relation of the repetitive elements of the historical process to the unique and the particular.[4] In the nature of the case such a procedure

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[1]Aubrey, op. cit., p. 141. [2]Cohen, op. cit., p. 464.

[3]Cf. Paul Barth, Die Philosophie der Geschichte als Soziologie (3d and 4th eds.; Leipzig: O. and R. Reisland, 1922), pp. 18-157. While Barth is not a materialistic mechanist in that he emphasizes the role of mind in society, still he holds that the methods of the natural sciences are applicable to the study of history. This belief rests on a conception of society as a spiritual organism in which the individual parts of necessity conform to and find expression through the collective will. Sociology, therefore, is the science of the social will (p. 154). It is concerned with the description of those regularities in the behavior of social organisms which may be termed social laws (p. 105). The task of the historian qua scientist is the formulation of the laws of social development. As we should expect, development means "die Entfaltung von Teilen, die zusammengefaltet schon vorhanden sind" (p. 90), not the emergence of genuinely new entities.

[4]H. G. Wood, Christianity and the Nature of History (New York: Macmillan Co.; Cambridge, England: University Press, 1934), p. 17: "The history of historiography in the nineteenth century is largely taken up with attempts to develop history as a science on the analogy of the physical sciences. In the twentieth century, historians have come to realise that such attempts must necessarily fail. Beyond the realm of scientific generaliza-

means the abandonment of the standard of objectivity demanded by the physical sciences, for at best one can merely estimate the role of the contingent and the individual in history, and the estimate will vary with the individual historian.

Thus in the development of the theoretic basis of history, as in the description of historical events, it seems impossible to reduce the element of subjectivity and of tentativeness to the degree possible in the natural sciences. Therefore the problem of historical objectivity is seen to be not one of distinguishing statements which are objectively valid from those which are not, but rather of ascertaining the degree to which, given his subject matter, the historian may approximate scientific objectivity in the description of events.[1] This means that we must speak always of historical probabilities rather than of historical certainties and that the authority of the historian must always remain a tentative authority.[2]

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tions, the realm of relatively stable factors in human nature and its environment, the realm of measurable repetition, lies the realm of personality, of concrete events and causes, of the particular, the non-repeatable, the non-predictable, and the historian cannot accomplish his work without taking account of this latter realm. His task is to trace the development of a unique story, not to discover illustrations of general laws." Cf. ibid., Preface, p. i; "History and Historiography," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences; "Historiography" in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; E. W. Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," Philosophical Review, XLI (1932), 443-53; Barth, op. cit., pp. 32-57.

[1]Cf. Wood, op. cit., p. 16: "It is a mistake to press the distinction between history and physics to a division. The historian must also deal in general laws where they are available. As Adrian Coates puts it, 'history deals with two classes or levels of knowledge, the level of personality, of concrete events, and causes, and the level of scientific generalizations and abstract causes.' The positions essential to the proper understanding of history are these. First, history must embrace both levels of knowledge. Its claim to be a science does not depend on its confining its attention to the level of scientific generalizations and abstract causes, or on its power to reduce concrete events and causes to such generalizations. Second, its distinct position as a science depends on its recognition and understanding of the first level of knowledge."

[2]It should not be implied that the problems of subjectivity and of tentativeness are peculiar to the social sciences, though they appear in their most acute form in these disciplines. Nor is the concept of causality held without debate in the more exact sciences. Cf. Aubrey, op. cit., pp. 159-66; Edgar Wind, "Some Points of Contact between History and Natural Science" in

A second major problem is raised for the social gospel by the relativistic character of history. As noted, the standards set up by the social gospel theologians studied were derived not from revelation nor from an autonomous ethic but from the study of history itself, i.e., from an interpretation of Jesus' way of life linked with a theory of the nature of history as involving progress toward a world-wide community of love. But historical judgments are relative on the one hand to the viewpoint of the observer,[1] and on the other to the context in which the event occurred. Thus the attempt to set up criteria for the evaluation and direction of the historical process is met not only with the problem of the objective validity of historical judgments, but with that of the relation of the past to the present, a matter of prime importance for a social gospel theology which attempts to relate past insights to present needs.

Let us consider the latter problem in more detail. In the first place, we note that if standards of value are to be derived from the historical process itself, the only possible test of the value of an event becomes that of efficient performance of function. That is, a historical event must be seen in the perspective of its causes and its effects before its significance can be estimated, and that estimate is then seen to be relative to the context in which it is made.[2] But, it may be asked, how then can a historical event have significance for any period other than its own? How can standards of judgment relevant to a specific situation be of use in solving a problem raised by a new situation? For example, if the significance of Jesus' life

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R. Klibansky and H. J. Paton (eds.), Philosophy and History (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 255-64.

[1]For example it is possible to discuss the significance of Jesus for his day from the viewpoint of his contemporaries; it is also possible to estimate his significance for his day from a later perspective. In both cases the estimate will be conditioned by the bias of the historian, though in the first instance the effort will be made to reduce that bias to a minimum, and in the second it will be frankly admitted as a part of the data under consideration. Cf. Woodbridge, op. cit., pp. 24, 25; Aubrey, op. cit., pp. 51, 52.

[2]S. J. Case, "Whither Historicism in Theology" in Miles Krumbine (ed.), The Process of Religion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), pp. 59-64.

is to be estimated in terms of the function which he fulfilled for first century Palestine what is the value of that life for twentieth century America?

Two answers are possible to this question. We may say that his life has value for twentieth century America in so far as our experiences are analogous to those of the first century. This is the answer given by those modernist theologians who speak of "abiding experiences,"[1] or of an "essential Christian continuum"[2] to be discerned among the changing thought forms. Their loyalty to Jesus is based on the assumption that "human nature and its needs remain substantially the same throughout the ages."[3] On the other hand, we may assert that certain historic events, like the life of Jesus, come to have a symbolic value whose content each age creates for itself. Thus the center of interest shifts from the historical Jesus to the Christ of faith, and it matters not what function the life of Jesus fulfilled for first century Palestine since our interest is in a Christ of faith who will meet contemporary needs.

But these answers are far from satisfactory. Let us consider the first alternative. Are the abiding experiences mentioned genuinely analogous to those experiences of modern life which the social gospel is designed to meet? At the outset we are struck by the fact that the social gospel theologians in their attempt to relate the teaching of Jesus to the problems of group life, far from dealing with an area of common experience, have to do with precisely the area of greatest difference between twentieth century America and first century Palestine. Thus the question of the relevance of these "abiding experiences" to the problem at issue cannot be avoided. In the second place, if the self is in part a social product,[4] then no area of life remains untouched by the social milieu, and all experiences suffer change with changing conditions. Thus, on the surface at least, it

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[1]H. E. Fosdick, The Modern Use of the Bible (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), chaps. i, iv.

[2]S. Mathews as cited in E. E. Aubrey, "Theology and the Social Process," in Krumbine, op. cit., pp. 24, 25.

[3]Cf. George Mead, Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

[4]Ibid.

would seem highly problematical whether the social gospel theologian can gain help from the values relevant to the experience of a past age, when the problems for which he needs guidance arise out of quite different circumstances of life and condition even his inmost attitudes.

The second alternative is even less satisfactory to the historically minded person, for it means the abandonment of history as a check on contemporary insights. A symbol has value to the degree that it is regarded as standing for some deep truth, and consciously to read into it whatever content one pleases is to fall into a fruitless allegorizing ultimately destructive of faith.[1] Jesus was a historical person. Therefore the Christ of faith will have value as a symbol only to the degree that He appears to be a valid representation of the Jesus of history or of some aspect of his life.[2] The Gnostic heresy rises ever and again but with sure instinct must always be put down. To be sure, we may feel that the Jesus of history has nothing to contribute to our present needs, or that the difficulties of historical investigation are such that a trustworthy picture of his life cannot be drawn. But in that case let us abandon the meaningless symbols of his life and seek elsewhere for symbols that will "speak to our condition."[3] The honest man can do no other, for it is psychologically impossible for him to draw comfort and guidance from a symbol which he knows to be false in the sense that it corresponds to nothing but his own vain dreams.[4]

Thus the attempt of the social gospel theologians studied to derive standards of value adequate for the direction of our common life from the study of individual historical events, and in particular from the life of Jesus, would seem a very dubious procedure. On the other hand, the attempt to find "adequate bases for judging relative values"[5] from some theory of the nature

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[1]Compare the results of early Christian typology.

[2]No doubt some of these representations are a far cry from the living figure, but those who worshipped them believed.

[3]Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation, trans. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932), p. 57.

[4]Cf. E. W. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion (New York and London: Scribners, 1933), chap. vii.

[5]Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies, p. 229.

of the process as a whole is not without its difficulties, as our study of the problematical status of the doctrine of progress revealed. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that, barring intuitive judgments, no conceivable basis for evaluation of the process as a whole is available from within the process itself. Furthermore, even if it were possible to view the total process from some transcendent perspective, its apparently creative character would necessitate continual revision of the judgments made. Hence it would seem that there is no escape from the relativities of history by the route of historical interpretation.[1]

To what impasse are we brought by this analysis of historical methodology? If the conclusions of the historian possess only a tentative authority, and if his judgments of value possess only a relative validity, what attitude should be taken toward the use of history in the reformulation of the social gospel? Some would counsel its abandonment in favor of mysticism, dialectic, or revelation. But this procedure seems to me unduly to impoverish our religious thinking, for without the freeing touch of historical understanding we are doomed either to the fretful acceptance of the "dogmatisms of another day,"[2] or to cramping confinement in our own little "cage of modernity."[3] Furthermore, the abandonment of the techniques and insights of the historian lays us open to those dangers of inaccuracy and of obscurantism which are the peculiar perils of religion.[4] History may at least

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[1]Woodbridge, op. cit., p. 52: "History is just the denial of absolute considerations. It is the affirmation of relative considerations, of considerations which are relative to a selected career. There is no other kind of history possible." Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, Christian Thought (London: University of London Press, 1923), pp. 44 ff.; Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 453 ff. He quotes Troeltsch as follows: "The essential and necessary relativism of genetic-historical thinking appears to stand in radical and hopeless contrast to any thought of a universal, absolute goal, and appears to make utterly impossible the solving of an historical crisis in the direction of such goals" (ibid., p. 455).

[2]Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1935), p. 4.

[3]Aubrey, in Krumbine, op. cit., p. 52.

[4]On this point Woodbridge quotes E. B. Tylor as follows: "To expect to look modern life in the face and comprehend it by mere inspection, is a philosophy whose weakness can easily be tested. . . . . To ingenious attempts at explaining by the light

enrich our understanding of human behavior, save us from certain types of error, and inspire us to creative activity.[1] It may be that these are its only valid functions.[2]

But the last word has not been spoken as to the possibility of using history as a source of moral judgments. Let us consider in more detail the implications of historical relativism for this enterprise. At the outset we observe that if historical relativism is indicative of a state of historical atomism and of anarchy of value, it is futile to seek for standards of value in the historical realm. But the case for historical atomism rests on an over-emphasis on the unique, the spontaneous, and the new in history, whereas historical events, far from being isolated, unconnected occurrences, are grouped together in a great variety of time processes,[3] each displaying structure,[4] continuity,[5] and selective activity.[6] Hence historical relativism implies not atomism but plurality of process.[7]

The theory is therefore advanced that the contemplation

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of reason things which want the light of history to show their meaning, much of the learned nonsense of the world has indeed been due (op. cit., pp. 61, 62). Cf. Wood, op. cit., Preface, p. xix.

[1]Case, in Krumbine, op. cit., pp. 64-71.

[2]For example, note the insistence of A. E. Haydon that the past can offer us nothing of use in our modern perplexities but the inspiration of the continuing quest for the good life. Cf. Haydon, in Krumbine, op. cit., chap. xiii.

[3]Woodbridge, op. cit., pp. 32-47.

[4]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 326; Woodbridge, op. cit., p. 46.

[5]Woodbridge, op. cit., chap. iii.

[6]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, pp. 283-87; Woodbridge, op. cit., pp. 4, 5; 41-51.

[7]Thus Troeltsch speaks of the "structures and processes of cultural life, which, although they may contain many elements of both the psychical and the physical sort, and may include much complexity and many tensions, yet have an inner coherence and unity which gives them genuine individuality. Such individual totalities are: nationalities, states, classes, guilds, periods in civilization, cultural tendencies, religious fellowships, complex processes of all sorts, such as political revolutions or the industrial revolution" (Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 449). Cf. Troeltsch, Christian Thought, pp. 13, 14.

of these various historical complexes of processes will reveal the standards of value valid for each.[1] Accordingly, the individual to whom the issues of contemporary history are of ethical moment is advised to determine, as objectively as possible,[2] the dominant values of those historical processes with which he is most intimately allied (i.e., of human history as compared with the history of the stars,[3] or of western civilization as compared with the civilization of the Orient[4]), and to devote himself to the task of achieving their fruition.[5] In this way, while recognizing their partial and tentative character, and without divorcing them from the historical situation to which they are relevant, it would seem possible for him to make use of those insights which the various historical perspectives afford.

The problem, however, is to determine which of the various overlapping and at times conflicting processes in which the individual is a participant is to be given precedence.[6] Shall the selection be in terms of culture areas,[7] national unities, class loyalties, racial strains, religious affiliations, or of the economic, political, social, and intellectual developments which cut across them all? Or is the decision to be made with reference to some event in history regarded as the "center of history," and hence as the principle of meaning and of purpose?[8] And what of

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[1]Troeltsch, Christian Thought, pp. 79 ff., 117 ff.

[2]Troeltsch, "Historiography," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 457.

[3]Woodbridge, op. cit., pp. 52-57.

[4]Ernst Troeltsch, Der Historismus und seine Probleme, Vol. III, Gesammelte Schriften (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1922), chap. iv.

[5]Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 456-58.

[6]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, pp. 327-32.

[7]Again there is disagreement as to how these culture areas are to be defined. For example, compare Troeltsch's periodization with that of Spengler.

[8]Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History (New York and London: Scribners, 1936), pp. 257, 258. Barring miraculous revelation, such a choice would seem to rest on intuitive judgments whose subjective character make necessary fuller validation.

the eighteenth century ideals of the unity of humanity and the intrinsic worth of human personality in terms of which much of modern history has been written? Must they be abandoned along with the conception of universal history? Troeltsch's emphasis on the importance of analyzing and developing further the inner unity of the great culture areas of the world as the most "inclusive basis of loyalty conceivable at present,[1] is preferable to the exaltation of narrower entities such as nation or class, but as Lyman observes: "Because he holds that each culture is a unique 'individual totality,' he cannot discover universal principles which can guide us toward world unity, whether in logic or ethics or religion."[2] Once having envisaged the ideal of a unified world order in which the conditions of life promote the growth of freedom and of creative activity for each individual, lesser loyalties lack compelling power.

The point is that, though various values are discernible in the various historical processes, the circumstances of life will not permit us to remain in contemplation of these values but forces us to choose from among them, and in the last analysis this choice of loyalties must be made with reference to an autonomous ethic.[3] But how is such an ethic to be achieved, and what is its relation to those values which appear in the various historical processes? Is it to be a purely arbitrary declaration with "no other relevance to the course of events than what is supplied by the conscious purposings and strivings of men toward that ideal,"[4] or is it possible to rest it on some metaphysics of nature and history? It is plain that philosophy must come to the aid of history in the solution of this problem.

In the first place, it is the task of the philosopher to criticize the values described by the historian in terms of their

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[1]Troeltsch, Christian Thought, pp. 119 f.; Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 456 f.: "He affirms that history knows no oneness of mankind, and hence the idea of humanity is a pale abstraction which throws no light on historical problems."

[2]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, pp. 342, 343, footnote. Cf. Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 463 f.

[3]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 331.

[4]Ibid.

rationality and their inclusiveness.[1] This means that in each specific historical situation involving a choice of values it is desirable to seek that solution by which the greatest number of values can be preserved and furthered. Here the universal ethical ideals of the social gospel have yet to be superseded as a norm. But a satisfactory social ethic cannot be defined in terms of rationality and inclusiveness alone. It must be considered also in relation to the conditions provided by nature and history for its fulfillment. Thus, in the second place, it is the task of the philosopher to grapple with the metaphysical problems involved in the relation of his ethical ideal and the real situation, of the goal envisaged and the actual materials for its achievement.

It will be maintained, of course, that consideration of these ultimate issues is futile as for the most part beyond the scope of our knowledge, unnecessary in that the real criteria of value inhere in the meanings discovered in the actual situation, and productive of harm in that it tends to distract attention from the specific problems which must be solved.[2] But it is our contention that, though this position was possible and even desirable so long as a fundamental optimism prevailed with respect to the possibilities of historical achievement, it is ill adapted to the needs of a generation baffled by the growing realization

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[1]By this we do not mean to advocate a return to a rational ethic of universal scope derived in Kantian fashion from logical categories and the sense of obligation. It is a temptation to regard such an ethic as an excellent norm by which to test the cultural values which emerge in the social process, since its principles "derive their right and their necessity from their significance and content, quite independently of their origin in the psychological concatenation" (Troeltsch, Christian Thought, pp. 45 f). But unfortunately the absolute character which makes the rational ethic valuable as a norm, lies precisely in the fact that it is derived from a source which is irrelevant to the relativities of existence, and our concern is with the relation of this ideal norm to the processes of history. As Niebuhr observes, only if the absolute can be regarded as inherently related to the historic process while at the same time unaffected by it, is the tension set up between the relativities of history and the absolutes of thought which issues in creative moral struggle (Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York and London: Harpers, 1935), p. 9. Cf. Troeltsch, Christian Thought, pp. 58, 59; "Historiography," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. It would seem better to avoid the positing of absolutes than to be involved in this paradoxical situation.

[1]John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1922), pp. 278-93. Cf. Ward, Which Way Religion, p. 42.

of the implications of historical relativism, and broken by the historical catastrophes in which it has participated. Only by the development of a new world view adequate to the questions raised by these tragic experiences can the universal ethical ideals of the social gospel maintain their validity in the face of widespread pessimism and despair.

The crux of the matter lies in the problem of freedom. To what extent are men free or becoming free to realize the universal ideals projected by the imagination? In the first place, it appears that unless history can be regarded as a creative process or complex of processes in which the future is not completely determined by the past, it is useless to hope for a better society. Thus the emphasis of organismic philosophies of history on the concept of process as fundamental to the understanding of nature and history is of primary importance in that it serves as the basis of belief in the possibility of change in some direction or other.[1]

However, recognition of the reality of process is but the first step, for we need not only the assurance of novelty but evidence that there are processes in nature and in history which may serve to promote and sustain the goals desired. To this question also the organismic philosophies of history give an affirmative answer. In history as in nature a process is an organizing activity which not only makes for increasing co-ordination in itself but tends to blend with other processes in the direction of historical unity.[2] The outstanding example from the biological realm is the emergence of man, since in man various processes combined to produce an entity at once more intricate, more highly

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[1]A. N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 354, 355. Cf. Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies, p. 185. The dialectic philosophers also insist on the dynamic character of history. Cf. Tillich, The Interpretation of History, pp. 5, 59, 244, 245. "The circular line is disrupted in the historical view of being. Time tears reality out of its limitation in space to create a line that does not return to itself but nevertheless does not weaken but strengthens the power of being. The happening, in so far as it is determined by time, proceeds toward a goal; it has a direction in which something is to be realized that comes into the whole of being, not as a thing recurrent but as something new" (p. 245).

[2]Whitehead, op. cit., p. 256. Cf. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, pp. 271, 272, 284, 331-33; Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies, pp. 180, 181.

organized and more free than those preceding.[1] In the social realm the most striking example of this tendency is in the development of economic processes to such a point of interdependence that a closely integrated, functionally organized society is required if modern technological civilization is to survive.[2] Here again the new development is in the direction not only of greater complexity and integration, but of greater freedom.[3] Hence it would seem that there is ground for hope that the processes of nature and history, far from being antithetical to our universal ideals, are contributory to their achievement and their conservation.[4]

But the question must be raised as to whether the analysis of these organizing processes and their implications for the ideal of the harmonious and free society takes adequate account of the catastrophic aspects of existence. The temptation of the organismic philosophies of history is to regard change after the analogy of growth or development,[5] rather than after the analogy

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[1]Mead, op. cit., p. 251.

[2]Ibid., p. 295. Cf. Tillich, op. cit., p. 71: "Mankind today is more than an ephemeral idea. Mankind has become a reality with respect to economics and politics, for the fate of every section is dependent on the fate of all sections of mankind."

[3]Mead, op. cit., pp. 288-89: "Until that functional organization is fully carried out, there is the opportunity for exploitation of the individual; but with the full development of such organization we should get a higher spiritual expression in which the individual realizes himself in others through that which he does as peculiar to himself."

[4]Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion, p. 341. Cf. Lyman, "Ernst Troeltsch's Philosophy of History," op. cit., XLI, 465. "It becomes very necessary to recognize pluralism in history. Only the pluralism which will most need recognizing is not that of cultural areas (Kulturkreise) but that of strands of positive ethical and cultural value interwoven and entangled with strands of negative or indifferent value. From this point of view the task of cultural synthesis becomes one of disentangling and reweaving, with the idea of a world civilization ever in view, something the ground-pattern of which we already know."

[5]Tillich, op. cit., p. 134: "Development . . . . contains nothing of conflict and historical fate. One sees humanity as a pupil marching in a straight line toward the knowledge of the eternal forms. Through this, however, the absolute position of the subject is in no respect shaken. The knowing individual subject is merely broadened into the knowing universal subject."

of struggle or conflict, and thus, as with the doctrine of progress, to weaken the ethical demand. Here the emphasis of the dialectic interpretation of history on the tensions of existence as holding the clue to the nature of historical reality not only calls attention to a truth of social experience but offers a needed warning. The fact is that the various historical processes clash at times instead of blending, and the higher the degree of organization the greater the threat of disaster.[1] To be sure, the organismic philosophies are far from denying the factor of strife in the world. Whitehead himself observes:

> Strife is at least as real a fact in the world as Harmony. . . . . Until some outline of understanding has been reached which elucidates the interfusion of strife and harmony, the intellectual driving force of successive generations will sway uneasily between the two.[2]

But in the organismic world view the danger is that strife be equated with imperfection--for so it appears in retrospect--whereas it should be given a more positive significance.

The difference is a subtle one, but clarified to a degree in Tillich's position that the choice before us at any moment of existence is not between Advance and Decline,[3] i.e., between the processes of integration and disintegration, but between the Divine and the Demonic, i.e., between Advance and Destruction.[4] The distinction which he makes between formlessness and contradiction of form is very acute,[5] and the corresponding observation that the destructive processes gain their power through uniting with the form creating, rather than in isolation from them, gives us pause.[6] The devil may not be a woman but his incarnation is usually such as to disarm suspicion! The evil achieves its potency by uniting with the good. Further, nothing good is wholly good since it always contains the possibility of evil. This is

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[1]Niebuhr, Does Civilization Need Religion? p. 97.

[2]Whitehead, op. cit., pp. 39, 40. [3]Ibid., p. 354.

[4]Tillich, op. cit., p. 97. [5]Ibid., p. 81.

[6]Ibid., p. 91: "The simple lack of form, the weakness of social structure is naturally not demonic. Demonry is the reign of a superindividual, sacred form which supports life, which at the same time contains the force of destruction in such a way that the destructive power is essentially connected with its creative power."

the tragedy of historical as of personal existence, but its recognition promotes the spirit of humility which is the condition of all achievement.

Thus in seeking a metaphysic for the social gospel we find ourselves heartened by the evidence that our lives are spent in a changing world of seemingly inexhaustible potentiality, strengthened by our observation of the activities of form creating processes, and sobered by the realization of the potencies for evil inherent in these same processes. The call of history is to the achievement of salvation in the creation of the harmonious society, but we do well to work out that salvation in fear and trembling.

In conclusion, we return to a brief summary of the implications for modernism and in particular for the social gospel of these observations regarding the respective roles of history and philosophy in the creation of a social ethic. The insistence of the modernist upon the functional approach to theology is admirable, for a theology which is unrelated to the needs of the time is without vitality. Accordingly, the first task of the social gospel theologian is to achieve an adequate understanding of the origin and nature of the social problems of the present day, and of the values at stake. This means that he must make use of history to enrich his understanding of human behavior, to insure his avoidance of certain types of error, and to become acquainted with the range and variety of values to be cherished and their relevance to various types of social living. History provides the factual content of ethical judgments. But philosophy must provide the critique of these ethical judgments. Since the conclusions of the historian possess only a tentative authority and his judgments of value only a relative validity, it is evident that the theologian must turn to the philosopher for clarification and analysis of the underlying issues when a choice of values is involved.

And never were the insights of the philosopher more needed. For the social gospel theologian must continue to affirm his belief in the possibility of achieving an increasingly harmonious and unified world order in which the individual may live an increasingly rich, varied, and creative life, in spite of the fact that the former foundations of this ideal, namely, the authority of Jesus and the doctrine of progress have been under-

mined. The attempt to recapture the historical Jesus slavishly to imitate his way of life is futile. It is of primary importance to understand, as far as may be, the life of Jesus and the ideals for which he stood, for judgments of value should be based on the richest possible content, and Jesus' significance as a creative religious genius is very great. But this procedure does not mean uncritical and inevitable acceptance of his way of life as the final norm. Instead, choices must be made on the basis of the most inclusive social ethic conceivable at the moment, with due recognition of its tentative character and of the compromises necessitated in relating the far goal to the specific situation. The ideals of the social gospel are self validating in the sense that they represent the most inclusive social ethic yet envisaged and thus meet the demands of the philosopher for rationality and inclusiveness. The social gospel theologian may take his stand upon them without apology.

Further, there is hope that a new interpretation of history is in the making which will satisfy the various criticisms of the doctrine of progress presented above, and serve as a new foundation for the social ideals advocated. I refer to the various organismic philosophies of history with their assertions (1) that world history is to be understood in terms of the emergence of the new from the complex interaction of the various physical, biological, and social processes, (2) that some of these processes sustain and further the harmonious social organization of life desired. In a sense this is a reinterpretation of the doctrine of progress but it lacks the absoluteness, universality, and certainty of the former versions and thus squares better with the tragic aspects of human experience and the necessity of ceaseless moral effort. There is no escape from tentativeness and relativity,--nor is an escape desirable at the price of flexibility and growth. All hope of a better society depends on the very tentativeness and relativity which are so weakly disparaged.

In fine, the resources of the social gospel theologian can be summarized as follows: (1) The historian offers the raw material of ethical judgments. (2) The pragmatist offers inclusiveness as a defensible criterion of ethical judgments, and gives it concrete content in terms of the loyalties involved in each specific decision. (3) The exponents of the various organismic philosophies provide a metaphysical undergirding for broad

ethical ideals. (4) The advocates of the dialectical point of view, together with the pragmatist, forbid indulgence in the vain dream of an easily attained Utopia and fulfill an important critical function by their emphasis upon the inescapable tensions of existence. Out of these materials can the new social gospel be formulated.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The social gospel in America is a phase of modernist theology in which a considered attempt is made to apply the teachings of Jesus to the problems of an industrial society. Its appearance cannot be understood without an appreciation of the social conditions at the turn of the century which aroused the conscience of ethically sensitive men and women to the need for social reform. Nor can its theoretical formulation be understood apart from the contributions of the social sciences to modern thought. For to them is due the articulation, and, to a certain extent, the creation of our modern social consciousness with its dual emphasis on the social determination of the individual and on the possibility of social control. Further, with them originated that interest in the social nature and function of religion which is of particular importance to the social gospel theologian.

It is not within our province, however, to attempt a detailed study of the history of the social gospel in its genetic development, fascinating and important as that story is. Our concern is rather with an analysis and evaluation of the theory of the social gospel as it developed under the stimulus of the social sciences. In particular, our interest lies in the way in which the social gospel theologians related the Christian world view, namely, the concept of the Kingdom of God, to the interpretation of history and society popular at the time, namely, the theory of progress. For without knowledge of its roots it is impossible to understand and evaluate the resulting social ethic.

As in the case of all modernist theology, the crucial point of estimate of the social gospel lies in the way in which the "permanent and central values of inherited orthodoxy" are related to new problems and ideas. Accordingly, we have studied the social gospel literature, in particular the work of Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, Shailer Mathews, and Harry F. Ward, the most important representatives of this type of theology in America in the first two decades of the present century, with the

following questions in mind: Do the authors make use of an idea of progress? If so, what form does the doctrine of progress take? Secondly, how is the idea of progress related to traditional Christian theology? What rôle does it play in the modernizing of Christian tradition? Finally, how is the resulting combination to be evaluated? These are the questions at issue.

Evidence is not lacking that all four of the individuals mentioned hold to a concept of progress as an integral part of their thought. Progress is conceived as movement in the direction of a world wide democracy in all areas of life,--political, social, economic. The following quotation is a typical expression of this faith:

> It is increasingly apparent that the new order both in plan and in experiment is forming around certain definite principles. Men everywhere are seeking for a larger measure of equality and for the realization of fraternity in universal service to each other. There are more and more determined to make the social machinery an efficient means to the highest ends of human living. It is becoming manifest that the development of personality is to supersede the acquisition of goods as the goal of social activity and that the fullest development of personality is to be found in the effort to realize the solidarity of the human family.
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> These developments of the present hour make it still clearer that the principles around which the new order is forming did not drop suddenly out of the sky, were not merely conceived in the imaginations of great men, but have their roots in social necessity. They are the historical unfolding of the spiritual possibilities of the human race out of the environment in which mankind has successively found itself and which it has progressively conquered. Their development and enlargement indicate very clearly that there is in all history a stream of progress. It by no means always flows straight forward; sometimes it eddies and its main currents turn upon themselves, the whole stream bends and flows backward for a space, but in the long run there is progress.[1]

It is a faith based upon a social philosophy concerned with the establishment of three major presuppositions: (1) Human history, biological and social, is the record of the emergence and growth of spiritual values; (2) The achievement of these values rests upon the organic character of biological and social life and is furthered by co-operation or mutual aid; (3) The whole process stems from the creative activity of the immanent God observable in nature and in man. Gladden, Mathews, and Ward each develop

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[1]Harry F. Ward, The New Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1919), p. 356.

these themes in their own fashion and with characteristic emphases, while Rauschenbusch, working on the same assumptions, is less concerned to validate them than to show their compatibility with Christian doctrine.

Secondly, analysis shows that the relation of this doctrine of progress to the Christian world view and ethic has been carefully worked out by these writers. At the outset the influence of the doctrine of progress is evident in the insistence that the Christian doctrine of salvation must be extended to include the redemption of society. Salvation is a social matter involving not the rescue of the individual from the world but his rescue in the world, and therefore the rescue of the world itself. Salvation is thus equated with the achievement of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the latter is identified with the goal of progress, namely, democracy. Likewise the law of progress, i.e., cooperation, is specifically equated with the law of the Kingdom, i.e., love. Says Ward, "the simplest statement of this law of social progress is the principle of reciprocity which was taught in the Sermon on the Mount."[1] Conversely, Christ's teaching of love is valid because it is an expression of a fundamental law of social organization confirmed by scientific tests. Obstructions to progress are equally obstructions to the Kingdom and they must be removed no matter what the price. "The cross is not accidental but is a law of social progress."[2]

Furthermore, the Kingdom is to be attained in the course of evolutionary development, not by a catastrophic upheaval. It should be thought of as an historical achievement, not as a miraculous event. In other words, it is identical with the goal of progress in that it is the end toward which the stream of biological and social evolution is tending. To the extent that genuine progress has been attained the kingdom is already partially realized. It is "among us," a transforming energy, a historical force, finding expression in democratic institutions. As even greater gains are made in the Christianization of the social order its coming is hastened. Indeed, even now "the Kingdom of God is

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[1] Ibid., p. 97.

[2] Walter Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus (New York: Association Press, 1925), p. 193.

at hand."[1]

Finally it is interesting to note the way in which the immanent God of the philosophy of progress is related to the Christian concepts of God and of man. Jesus' teaching of the Fatherhood of God is interpreted as indicative of God's essential kinship with men, and thus of the immanence of God in human life. The God of Jesus is one with Creative Love working in the processes of history and suffering with men in their efforts to combat sin and imperfection. The theory of evolution simply amplifies the concept of God as Father. Thus the philosophical conception of the immanent God is personalized by its identification with the Christian belief in God as Father, and the Christian concept in turn is given an evolutionary slant by its reinterpretation in the light of contemporary philosophy. Further, if men are the sons of God, human personality should be reverenced because of its inherent worth. In this way the Christian concept of man reinforces the ideal of social solidarity and equality.

In evaluating this social philosophy so briefly outlined, we must first pay tribute to the achievements of these theologians. Notwithstanding a great tradition as to the concern of religion with the character of the common life, American Christianity of the latter half of the nineteenth century was in danger of becoming intellectually barren and socially futile. Its repudiation of scientific thought, especially with respect to the theory of evolution, and its failure to concern itself with the problems of an increasing industrial collectivism, were driving intellectuals, social radicals, and laboring groups alike from the church. The social gospel leaders attempted to adjust to the world view and social philosophy of these groups, and, thanks in part to their efforts, the church today is still a vital force in American public life. This is no mean accomplishment.

Secondly, the choice of the idea of progress as a mediating doctrine in this modernization of Christianity was a particularly happy one, for the doctrine of progress, in its widest sense, contained not merely a crystallization of current philosophical and scientific thought on the nature of history, but an

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[1]Shailer Mathews, The Social Gospel (Philadelphia, Boston, etc.: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1910), p. 164. These words in capitals are the closing sentence of the book.

ethical deposit of the social idealism of three centuries. Thus it could serve at once as an approach to the modern world view and as a basis for a social ethic. The enlarged outlook on life to which Christianity fell heir in the doctrine of progress, and the conception of ethics as involving not merely regeneration of the individual but long time planning designed to destroy the social sources of evil were exceedingly valuable contributions. Furthermore, far from being incompatible with Christian thought, its basic assumptions of the worth of man and the value of life were in harmony with, if not derived from, the Christian tradition, thus making the combination an easy and natural one. Finally, since the average American at the turn of the century lived by his faith in progress, the social gospel leaders proved themselves master strategists in turning this source of emotional poise and moral enthusiasm to the uses of Christianity.

However, the question at issue is whether this type of religious philosophy is adequate for the direction and motivation of contemporary social idealism. In the first place, the methodology of these social gospel theologians is hard to defend, for their effort to reconcile Christian teaching with the doctrine of progress is an excellent illustration of the difficulties attendant on the method of modernism wherever applied. The standards which they adopted were derived not from revelation, nor from an autonomous ethic, nor from mystical experience, but from the study of history, i.e., from an interpretation of Jesus' way of life linked with a theory of the nature of history as involving progress toward a world wide community of love. But historical judgments are relative on the one hand to the viewpoint of the observer, and on the other to the context in which the event occurred. Thus the attempt to set up criteria for the evaluation and direction of the historical process by reference to some historical event is met not only with the problem of the objective validity of historical judgments, but with that of the relation of the past to the present, a matter of prime importance for a social gospel theology which attempts to relate past insights to present needs.

How can a historical event have significance for any period other than its own? How can standards of judgment relevant to a specific situation be of use in solving a problem raised by a new situation? Specifically, if the significance of Jesus'

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life is to be estimated in terms of the function which he fulfilled for first century Palestine, what is the value of that life for twentieth century America? The modernist would say that his life has value for twentieth century America in so far as our experiences are analogous to those of the first century. Accordingly, he speaks of "abiding experiences," or of an "essential Christian continuum" to be discerned among the changing thought forms. His loyalty to Jesus is based on the assumption that "human nature and its needs remain substantially the same throughout the ages." But we are struck by the fact that the social gospel theologians, in their attempt to relate the teaching of Jesus to the problems of contemporary group life, far from dealing with an area of common experience, have to do with precisely the area of greatest difference between twentieth century America and first century Palestine. Thus the question of the relevance of these "abiding experiences" to the problem at issue cannot be avoided. Furthermore, if the self is in part a social product, then no area of life remains untouched by the social milieu, and all experiences suffer change with changing conditions. Thus it would seem highly problematical whether the social gospel theologian can gain help from the values relevant to the experience of a past age, when the problems for which he needs guidance arise out of quite different circumstances of life and condition even his inmost attitudes.

On the other hand, the attempt to find adequate bases for social idealism from some theory of the nature of the historical process as a whole, in this case the doctrine of progress, is not without its difficulties. Thanks to the unprecedented historical developments of the twentieth century arising from the increasing complexity of an industrial civilization, and to the changes in the method of writing history due to the work of modern scientific scholarship, not only is the idea of progress under fire, but there is no agreement on any substitute philosophy of history. The old interpretations seem invalidated by recent events and a new interpretation is slow to emerge. Contributory to this lag is the prevalent scepticism among historians as to the possibility of achieving a new synthesis, a scepticism based on the realization of the inescapable subjectivity of all historical productions, even the most "scientific," and an awareness of the apparent irreconcilability of the multitudinous factors operative in

human affairs. The social gospel leaders cannot relate their ethical demands to the controlling forces in history for there is no agreement as to what these forces may be,--or indeed as to whether there be any dominant and sustained influences at all. Thus the sense of stability gained from reliance on a definite interpretation of life is lost, and a realistic social ethic in line with, instead of variance from, the dominant factors in life awaits development.

Those anxious to preserve the values of the social gospel, therefore, must decide whether to abandon philosophy of history as a basis for their ethical idealism, or to set forth a new philosophy of history acceptable to modern thought. Basic to this enterprise is a thorough study of the doctrine of progress in the light of radically different notions of history which are bidding for recognition. Accordingly, we now turn to a systematic analysis of the issues involved in belief in progress.

The nature of one's approach to the problem of progress is determined by three factors: the criterion of judgment selected, the time span within which it is applied, and the area,--geographical, racial or cosmic,--which is analyzed. For instance, it makes a great deal of difference whether the question under discussion is of progress in technology in the last century in America, of progress in scientific knowledge during the recorded history of western civilization, of progress in the intellectual capacity of the genus man, since the time of homo sapiens, or of progress in an all-embracing perfection in the "whole creation" from the beginning of time. The focal point of most discussions of progress is western civilization and the time span that of recorded history. But in this context progress seems problematical whether the criterion selected be material, aesthetic, intellectual, moral, or religious. Accordingly, the attempt is made to find evidence for progress by expanding the context within which it is measured. The time span is extended to include the whole of human history and biological development; the area of analysis takes in all mankind; the criterion is equated with survival value. In this setting progress appears either as a law of development or as a principle of creativity, according as the mechanistic or the vitalistic world view is the underlying metaphysic. Thus arise the theories of universal progress in which time merges with eternity; the cosmos is the scene of action; and

progress is equated with cosmic purpose.

The case for progress in history and biological development is argued as follows: First, it is asserted that social evolution has resulted in progress, for just as biological development issued in an end of value, i.e., man, so modern civilization with all its faults is judged superior to primitive. Not that modern civilization is to be considered the end result of social progress as man is regarded the end result of biological evolution, but that its character is sufficiently advanced over primitive life to indicate that society is moving in the direction of a goal, namely, the creation of a world community. Secondly, the theory of the essentially progressive character of the whole process is advanced, apparently on the same grounds as in the case of biological evolution, i.e., the assumption that historical development either follows necessary rules, or is creative in character. Thus we have individuals influenced by deterministic theories of evolution urging the discovery of the laws of history, while on the other hand those influenced by the vitalistic emphasis urge abandonment to the forces of change, confident that every new development is the work of the mysterious creative power inherent in the historic process and hence "for the best."

The bulk of the criticism of these theories of universal progress is directed not against the initial premise that progress has been made in the course of biological and social evolution, or against the assumptions of the worth of man and the reality of time and change on which this premise is based, important as these assumptions are, but against the conclusion that progress is universal and inevitable because implicit in the evolutionary process itself. The criticism takes various forms according as the mechanistic or the vitalistic version is under scrutiny, but three main types may be noted, namely, that generalizations concerning the nature of the evolutionary process as a whole cannot be made unless certain aspects are emphasized to the exclusion of others; secondly, that belief in its progressive character is derived not from a study of the process itself, but from certain a priori assumptions with respect to its origin, nature, and destiny which should be acknowledged; thirdly, that the doctrine is ethically demoralizing because lacking in the clear-cut criteria of progress essential to ethical action, and

because frequently productive of a laissez faire attitude with respect to evil.

Let us consider these objections in more detail. The mechanistic theories of progress break down because the idea of spontaneity as an "ultimate and universal category of all things" runs counter to attempts to interpret the evolutionary process in terms of uniform laws. This is particularly evident to historians who have discovered that "the uniqueness and unrepeatability of historical events are quite as significant as the general sociological laws which may be represented in them."[1] Thus laws of the evolutionary process are in no sense absolute or determinative, but are simply abstractions with respect to those phases of the process which lend themselves to generalization. It is plain, therefore, that since we cannot speak of the evolutionary process in terms of uniform causal sequences, we cannot speak of a universal law of progress. On the other hand, the vitalists' theory of universal progress breaks down because of an over emphasis of the category of spontaneity. There is certainly an element of contingency in the evolutionary process, but to regard it as evidence of the "inherent radicalism of nature herself"[2] is to give it a universal significance which is problematical. Any theory of progress based upon such generalizations must be abandoned.

However, although belief in evolutionary progress was expressed in terms of these monistic philosophies of evolution and is consequently affected by their modification, it has been justly observed that in the last analysis these philosophies appeared to support the doctrine of progress only because approached from the standpoint of a convinced optimism. The deterministic system seemed to offer a guarantee of progress because regarded a priori as good in itself or as the work of a beneficent Creator who sustains it, while the vitalistic was dependent upon belief in an innate purpose guiding the process in the direction of a desirable end. That is, spontaneity must mean creativity, and creativity must be indicative of purpose before the vitalistic theory of the

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[1]H. Richard Niebuhr in Paul Tillich, The Religious Situation (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932), Preface, p. xv.

[2]J. H. Robinson, The New History (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 264.

world appeared relevant to the doctrine of progress. Thus for mechanism the problem of origin is central, for vitalism that of destiny, and Dawson is quite right in his observation that the mechanistic theory of progress was only possible in the context of Deism, while the vitalistic derived its authority from the prevalent version of the Christian teleological conception of life.[1] And the importance of these prior assumptions becomes even more marked when we consider that in a different metaphysical context both mechanism and vitalism lend themselves to a cyclical theory of history, or to a theory of historical degeneration. In the case of the former, mechanism supports the notion of an endless repetition of meaningless events, vitalism of ceaseless flux; with respect to the latter, mechanism suggests the figure of the clock running down, vitalism of a dying organism.

Finally, that the doctrines of evolutionary progress may be ethically demoralizing is fairly evident. As stated, neither the mechanistic nor the vitalistic versions offer an adequate criterion of progress. "The one criterion for real Darwinism is the abstract success or prevalence of whatever happens to prevail, without any regard for its character. This leaves us with no criterion at all."[2] Nor is change in itself necessarily a good, though many exponents of the vitalistic theory come perilously near equating it with progress. Change may be destructive as well as creative; too great or too sudden changes in the circumstances of life may destroy an organism or a society; some standard of value other than mere becoming is necessary if the doctrine of progress is to have any ethical significance. Progress is a moral concept; it implies a judgment of better or worse, and the majority of scientists are at pains to point out that their researches do not give us this sort of information. This absence of moral standards was apt to go unnoticed, in part because individuals unconsciously read their own criteria of value into the evolutionary process, in part because of the tendency of the doctrines of progress to foster a specious optimism with respect to evil. The temptation is either to ignore the disagreeable aspects

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[1]Christopher Dawson, Progress and Religion (London: Sheed & Ward, 1931), pp. 190 f.; 220 f.

[2]W. R. Inge, God and the Astronomers (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1933), pp. 132, 133.

of life as relatively insignificant in the long run, or to accept them unquestioningly as the price of progress. Such progress, if progress it be, is blind, unethical progress. It is preferable to promote progress by intelligent activity which seeks to banish evil rather than to wait for good to come from evil by a process of unconscious growth.

In the light of this criticism of the doctrine of progress four main possibilities are open to contemporary philosophy of history: To abandon the idea entirely and turn to a theory of historical degeneration or of cyclical change as more in accord with the facts of nature and history; to shift the emphasis from the inevitability to the possibility of progress and work for its achievement in certain definite areas without further speculation as to the nature of the processes which may support it; to attempt a new interpretation of history which shall take account of its pluralistic character and yet serve to integrate men in their efforts to achieve progress by providing them with an acceptable metaphysic; to relate the hope of progress to some "unconditioned" aspect of existence made known by mysticism or revelation.

The second and third alternatives appeal to us as giving the most promise of a fruitful solution. The pragmatists offer a strong program for action in their assertion that history is to be understood as a complex of processes working toward ever new forms of existence, and that men have the ability to influence the direction of change through the struggle to achieve goals consciously chosen with reference to each specific situation and inclusive of the maximum values inherent in that situation. On the other hand, the organismic philosophies of history give us hope that there are processes in nature and in history which may serve to promote and sustain the goals desired,--that offer support in the "great task of unifying history." As Lyman observes:

> Just as an age-long process of biological development made possible human personality--a process which, if human personality has intrinsic worth, must be called progress--so there has been within the general stream of human evolution a development of morals which has meant a growth of individual personality and a growth of society in such a way that in varying degrees they have mutually furthered each other. So far as this is true or in process of becoming true, we are bound to acknowledge the reality of progress in human history.[1]

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[1] E. W. Lyman, The Meaning and Truth of Religion (New York and London: Scribners, 1933), p. 334.

The problem, however, is to link these various lines of progress,--organic, racial, social--in a general scheme of development which shall make clear the relationship between the necessary and the contingent elements in experience. To this end is posited the doctrine of emergent evolution which, by the device of allocating the various progressive movements to different levels of development, allows for both cumulative structural unities and indeterminate action. In a sense this is a reinterpretation of the doctrine of progress but it lacks the absoluteness, universality, and certainty of the versions relied upon by the social gospel theologians studied, and thus squares better with the tragic aspects of human experience and the necessity of ceaseless moral effort.

In conclusion, we append a brief recapitulation of our thesis and our position with respect to the issues raised by it. The study of the theoretical basis of the social gospel as formulated by Gladden, Rauschenbusch, Mathews, and Ward revealed (1) a dependence upon a doctrine of universal progress which can no longer be defended as a basis of social idealism; (2) a confidence in the authority of the historian which failed to take adequate account of the tentative and relativistic character of all historical judgments and the necessity of discriminating between the respective roles of history and philosophy in the creation of a social ethic. Therefore our interest in preserving the values of the social gospel led us to attempt an analysis (1) of the valid use of history in the reformulation of the social gospel, (2) of the issues involved in the development of a new philosophy of history as a basis for social idealism. Our conclusions may be summarized as follows:

The first task of the social gospel theologian is to achieve an adequate understanding of the origin and nature of the social problems of the present day, and of the values at stake. This means that he must make use of history to enrich his understanding of human behavior, to insure his avoidance of certain types of error, and to become acquainted with the range and variety of values to be cherished and their relevance to various types of social living. History provides the factual content of ethical judgments, but philosophy must provide the critique of these ethical judgments by clarification and analysis of the underlying issues when a choice of values is involved.

Secondly, the social gospel theologian must continue to

affirm his belief in the possibility of achieving an increasingly harmonious and unified world order in which the individual may live an increasingly rich, varied, and creative life, in spite of the fact that the former foundations of this ideal, namely, the authority of Jesus and the doctrine of universal progress have been undermined. The attempt to recapture the historical Jesus slavishly to imitate his way of life is futile. It is of primary importance to understand, as far as may be, the life of Jesus and the ideals for which he stood, for judgments of value should be based on the richest possible content, and Jesus' significance as a creative religious genius is very great. But this procedure does not mean uncritical and inevitable acceptance of his way of life as the final norm. Instead choices must be made on the basis of the most inclusive social ethic conceivable at the moment, with due recognition of its tentative character and of the compromises necessitated in relating the far goal to the specific situation. The ideals of the social gospel are self validating in the sense that they represent the most inclusive social ethic yet envisaged and thus meet the demands of the philosopher for rationality and inclusiveness. The social gospel theologian may take his stand upon them without apology.

In the third place, there is hope that a new philosophy of history is in the making which will satisfy the various criticisms of the doctrine of progress presented above, and serve as a new foundation for the social ideals advocated,--i.e., the interpretation of history advocated by the various philosophies of organism. Their assertions that world history is to be understood in terms of the emergence of the new from the complex interaction of the various physical, biological, and social processes, and that some of these processes sustain and further the harmonious social organization of life desired gives new confidence in the validity of the goals envisaged.

In fine, the resources of the social gospel theologian can be summarized as follows: (1) The historian offers the raw material of ethical judgments. (2) The pragmatist offers inclusiveness as a defensible criterion of ethical judgments, and gives it concrete content in terms of the loyalties involved in each specific decision. (3) The exponents of the various organistic philosophies provide a metaphysical undergirding for broad ethical ideals. (4) The advocates of the dialectical point of

view, together with the pragmatist, forbid indulgence in the vain dream of an easily attained Utopia by their emphasis upon the inescapable tensions of existence. Out of these materials can the new social gospel be formulated.

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